

Wild

AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

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Skiing the Kosciuszko
Main Range
Wilderness
photography

TRACK NOTES

South Australia's
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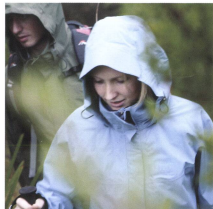


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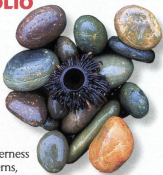
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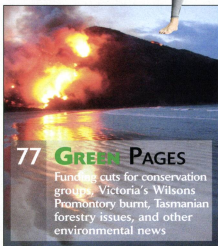


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Winter (Jul-Sep) 2005, issue 97 \$7.99*

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Cover Victoria's Wilsons Promontory before the recent fires. Michele Kohout at Kersops Peak, overlooking Waterloo Bay. *Steven Nowakowski*

Wild
AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS LITERATURE MAGAZINE
Established 1981

WARNING

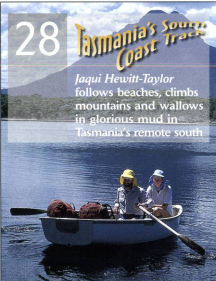
The activities covered in this magazine are dangerous. Undertaking them without proper training, experience, skill, regard to safety, and equipment could result in serious injury or death.



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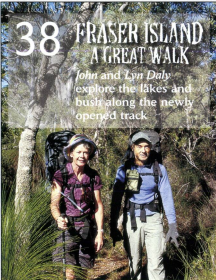
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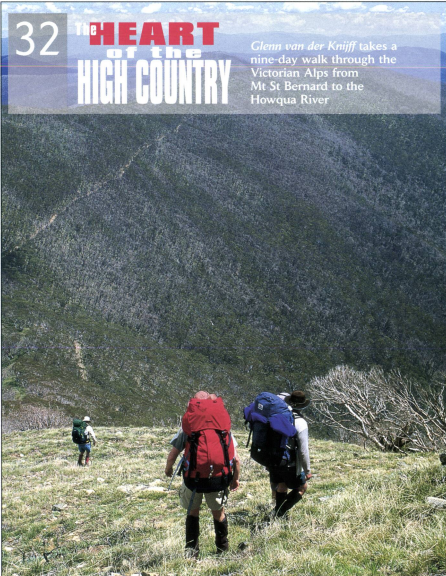
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FAREWELL *and thank you*

Founding Managing Editor hands on the baton after almost a quarter of a century

WITHIN A YEAR OF *WILD*'S LANDMARK 25TH anniversary issue, no 100, I am writing to personally farewell you. 'The bastard', I hear you say. 'He's always been on a junket—now he's abandoning his mates to go swanning around the world, indulging his passion for high and wild places.' In a sense you're right.

As foreshadowed by Megan's Editorial in the last issue, no 96, there has been a change of the guard at Wild Publications. As Megan indicated, this wasn't done to allow me to indulge my passions; at least not for the time being. However, you'd be right if you guessed that my absence was explained by some kind of journey. In fact, I've been obliged to stop working to devote all my time, and my (diminished) strength and energy to fighting a life-threatening illness. In July last year I was diagnosed with non-Hodgkins lymphoma, a type of cancer. Since then I have been confronted with other associated health issues, one of them almost terminal. As one friend put it, I am climbing a very high mountain; however, it's one I firmly believe can be climbed, despite the fact that I am still far from the summit. I'm certainly not on my own. I have an outstanding medical team and the support of an array of friends—led by my loyal and long-suffering wife, Sue—that is completely humbling both in its extent and its depth. Without either of these, I would not be here today.

As I look back over some 24 years of *Wild* it is clear that it, too, has never been the work of just one person. *Wild* would not have survived those frantic early days (and nights) without Michael Collie and Brian Walters, whom I met after two years of laying the foundations of the magazine. (Fortunately all of us were single at the time, as no marriage would have survived our relationship with such a demanding mistress as the young *Wild*.) Michael gave his all working at *Wild* for some seven years (once or twice working all night, something I could never manage). Brian was active in

the setting up, contents planning and legal work. To this day he has been a wise, generous and faithful counsel to Wild Publications. At this point I should also give due recognition to my parents for their outstanding assistance in those frantic early years of *Wild*. Without payment, my father set up and ran the subscription system for *Wild* and *Rock* and my mother edited every article and department.

From the outset we were adamant that *Wild* would be 'different'—it would not be just entertaining but also truly informative, even educational; and it would also do everything possible to ensure the preservation of wild places.

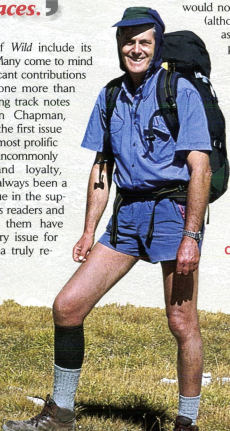
Major supporters of *Wild* include its amazing contributors. Many come to mind as having made significant contributions over the years, but none more than the guru of bushwalking track notes and equipment, John Chapman, who had an article in the first issue and is still one of our most prolific contributors. With his uncommonly generous attitude and loyalty, dealing with him has always been a pleasure. *Wild* is unique in the support it receives from its readers and advertisers. Many of them have been with us for every issue for more than 24 years—a truly re-

markable feat and one which has helped to ensure the survival of this magazine when so many have failed. With such a galaxy of outstanding supporters it is difficult to select examples, but no advertisers have 'put their money where their mouth is' more than Mountain Designs founder, the late Rick White, and the Spelean team. The Paddy Pallin group has also been a major, long-standing advertiser. Some outstanding people

have worked for *Wild* over the years; they have taught me a great deal. *Wild* has now been so organised that we have the smallest staff in some 20 years, but it is the most productive. It is a great credit to them that they have improved both output and quality, and that they are such a joy to work with. A magazine can be destroyed by its printer—we are fortunate to have had a superb one since our first issue. Whilst it is sad that we seem to have out-lived generations of York Press management, each has been as friendly, cooperative, trustworthy and quality-oriented as the one before. I salute all those whose support has nourished 'the *Wild* idea', which, at the time, may have appeared to be wishful thinking.

From the outset we were adamant that *Wild* would be 'different'—it would not be just entertaining (although we still see that as being of crucial importance) but also truly informative, even

Founding Managing Editor
Chris Baxter
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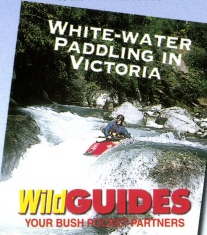
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See below for publication dates.

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Written submissions should be supplied by

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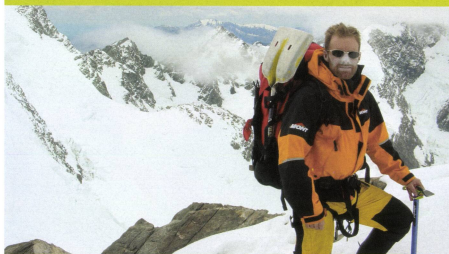
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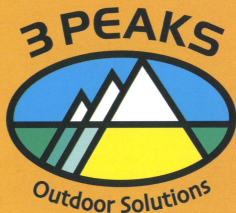
educational; and it would also do everything possible to ensure the preservation of wild places. We were adamant that it not be compromised: by bowing to advertisers and other pressure groups, nor by inaccuracy, superficiality or other mediocre workmanship. We determined that it would be managed consistently and ethically, with honest, transparent and universally applied principles. Finally, we were very keen to ensure that we operated at the forefront of efficient business management practices and that people could find fulfilment working for Wild. I'll let you judge how well we have succeeded in these ideals but you can rest assured that they are as alive today as they were at those fevered, earliest planning meetings.

And what of the future of *Wild*? Rest assured. I have spent years, consciously and subconsciously, working to ensure that when the torch was eventually handed on it would continue to burn, and burn even brighter. The systems, procedures and contacts of Wild Publications are the envy of the industry, and it is technologically advanced: facts recognised as long as 12 years ago, when Wild won an annual Victorian Government Small Business Award. However, as hinted above, its real strength lies in the depth and extent of its support, and the exceptional strength of its present staff. Having long considered the issue of succession, in March 2003, before I became ill, Sue and I sold half of Wild to Stephen Hamilton and (this then partner, now wife) Zoë Foulser. The idea was to bring youth (Stephen was then much the same age as I was when *Wild* started), energy and new skills (including marketing) to the management of Wild. Knowledge of, and a passion for, the *Wild* ethos and the rucksack sports—not to mention unquestionable integrity—were fundamental prerequisites. I had worked with Stephen at Wild for eight years in the late 1980s and early 1990s and been a personal friend since then—I was confident that Stephen could deliver on all counts. And delivered he has. I have been unable to work full-time since last August and at all since December. Consequently, the weight of leadership has fallen suddenly and heavily on Stephen. *Wild* nos 96 and 97, however, speak for themselves. In May, Stephen and Zoë acquired the balance of Wild Publications. I wish them every success.

By way of goodbye I must thank every one of you who has contributed to *Wild* over the years, in myriad ways, for helping to make a dream come true, and for being part of that dream. I found my role fulfilling and enriching beyond all expectation, learning a great deal and making many wonderful friends along the way. I give thanks for this great and unique opportunity and am extremely grateful.

Once I've climbed my own personal mountain I look forward to meeting you again on other summits. ☺

Chris Baxter
Founding Managing Editor
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Blushing like a schoolgirl...

Environment lovers beware!

I AM BECOMING INCREASINGLY AGITATED AT the gradual increase of 'political editorial content' in *Wild* magazine...I believe *Wild*, its Editor and contributing staff to be embarrassing themselves taking such a blatant and fixed position regarding environmental issues against the background of the unsurpassed popularity of the current Australian Government...recent editorials, snide headlines...and the magazine's blatant political pages with a caricature of the PM wielding a chainsaw are an embarrassment to genuine environment lovers who favour a 'balanced' approach of campaigning for what surely is our common goal of future environmental protection.

I am in favour...of protecting the environment and preserving it for future generations...but am intelligent enough to realise that 'mud slinging' the most popular Australian prime minister in living history...is a pressure-group tactic destined for long-term disaster...The reality is that if environment and other issue-based pressure groups want to progress their causes they must work with the current Australian Government...

If *Wild* magazine wishes to be relevant in the discussion and push for change I suggest they start with a balanced presentation of the environmental issues it supports and campaign in a constructive and unbiased manner...

Frankly if I want to read this type of biased and politically driven material I will buy a trade-union- or radical-left-wing-University rag.

Simon Blight
South Plympton, SA

Bring on the boycott

Don Noble's suggestion of mainland bushwalkers boycotting Tasmania is a great idea (*Wildfire*, *Wild* no 96). A boycott would stop the flood of mainland walkers and enable Tasmanian bushwalkers to enjoy their State's wilderness areas as we did fifty or sixty years ago. There would be no need for the eyesore of boardwalks, made necessary by the degradation of tracks by the hordes of interstate walkers. We could drink from our mountain streams again...and enjoy the luxury of sitting around a camp-fire in the evening...Expensive visitors' centres and infrastructure would be unnecessary.

I do not object to interstate or overseas walkers, but I do object to the exaggeration and distortion of the facts peddled by the extreme elements of the green movement. I am not a supporter of clear-felling, regeneration burn-offs or I080, but the fact is that the areas involved are relatively small when compared with the protected areas of this State.

Protest about clear-felling and logging in old-growth forests by all means, but please get all the facts right.

David M Harvey
Launceston, Tas

As yet we have seen nothing of the 110 000 hectares of forest the Howard Government promised to preserve in Tasmania. A likely candidate for inclusion may have been the Boyd Forests between the Florentine Valley and the South-west Wilderness World Heritage Area. Recently Forestry Tasmania has rushed to log this area in an attempt to degrade it so that it's not worthy of protection and therefore remains on the continuous har-

vest cycle. A casualty in this has been the popular day walk up Mt Wedge which is now closed. Rather than re-route the track Forestry Tasmania has just logged the coupe at the start of the track and stopped access. Such actions are hardly going to win over...Tasmanians to accept tree mining as a legitimate land use. Remember, this is 'world's best practice'!

Stephen Buntton
Hobart, Tas

After hiking the Overland Track during mid-January for the second time in three years I am still amazed at the beauty and magic of the forests, heathlands and grasslands...Unfortunately, for a great deal of the time I had to watch my feet as the track was extremely degraded: old boardwalk broken and wires poking up ready to grab at your boots, mud so deep that new foot-pads have been trampled through the adjoining bush and erosion so deep that it has created new streams out of the track.

The Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park is a unique, world-class wilderness experience. Why has the track been allowed to deteriorate so much in such a short period of time?

Ann McCoy
Howqua, Vic

Facts, figures and regulations

Several recent items ('The nanny state', *Wildfire*, *Wild* no 95; and 'Alert and alarmed', *Wildfire* and *Adventure Activity Standards* go national', *Scroggin*, *Wild* 96) have misrepresented a project that broadly involves our sector.

Here are some facts about the Victorian Adventure Activity Standards (AAS):

- The committee governing the overall project consists of eleven organisations, only six of which represent government...
- Content for each AAS was developed through workshops, consultation and review...Consultation was open to anyone with a particular interest in the activity.
- ...Development of the AAS...involved 81 not-for-profit and only 50 commercial organisations (excluding the snow activity groups) while the bushwalking AAS involved eight not-for-profit and only two commercial organisations...

...AAS have little or nothing to do with private recreation. The AAS are only developed for organisations conducting group activities...

The AAS increase communication rather than regulation. They are adaptable to specific circumstances. Most importantly, regulation has not increased and is unlikely to do so thanks



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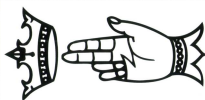


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Gordon Duff
Development Manager, Outdoor
Recreation Centre
Viewbank, Vic

Go you Aussie battler!

I have been amused by the banter in the last two issues of *Wildfire* concerning purchasing locally or direct from overseas retailers. I feel that the vital point has been missed. That is, if we as consumers purchase from Australian stores (who employ Australian staff, use Australian delivery drivers...) we will be supporting Australians...and not simply circumventing an important infrastructure.

As we are all aware there is little outdoors gear actually manufactured...in Australia but it is important to buy locally even if the product is actually produced overseas. A good retailer will be able to source product for consumers whether they stock it or not...offer personal advice, and give after-sales service...if the product that was bought direct from overseas fails, what is the procedure and/or cost of organising a warranty claim?

Sure, let's research on the web and be informed...but let's support Australia and Australians...

Marty Frost
Fishwick, ACT

Quibbles, scratches and disruption of the planet

I have been a regular reader of your magazine since its inception. The purpose in writing on this occasion is to comment on two items in *Wild* no 95...

In 'Razorback Rampage' the walkers...have closed-cell-foam sleeping-mats attached to their packs...On more than one occasion I have encountered fragments of blue sleeping-mat foam which has been shredded when travelling through the bush, thus offending the minimum impact...principle of bushwalking ethics...

In Michael Hart's letter to the editor on page 11...he makes reference to the ongoing debate about trekking poles and, specifically, to scratching of rocks with their carbide tips...I find myself thinking back to when I first started bushwalking (now some 57 years ago) and recall that almost without exception all of us wore hobnailed boots. Many were the scratches on rock and other evidence of these dinosaurs of the footwear world, but they didn't really upset the ecology of the planet. Surely there are greater environmental issues than a few marks on rock...

Peter Rodger
Arimdale, NSW

Having recently become a 'convert' to lightweight walking, I feel I have to comment on Peter Vella's letter in *Wild* no 96. The impression given is that the walker he mentioned

as coming to grief was an example of the dangers of lightweight walking. Lightweight walking has nothing to do with a minimalist approach but is about only taking what is necessary for the conditions. Wearing sandals in an alpine area is obviously not appropriate and has more to do with inexperience or stupidity than lightweight walking...

However, I do agree with Peter that lightweight walking may not be for the inexperienced user as you need experience, or appropriate advice, to decide what to take when and where.

Mick Ogrizek
Hoppers Crossing, Vic

I am writing concerning the advertisement on the inside back cover of your latest issue (*Wild* no 96). It proclaims to be a picture of a deep-sea angler-fish photographed in the deep.

It is actually a picture of a fangtooth (*Anoplogaster comata*). This is a member of the beryciform fishes, which include the orange roughie. The fangtooth does not have an illicium (lure) characteristic of angler-fish, indicating the picture has been digitally altered.

Spike Riddoch
South Hobart, Tas

Barneys over Barney

I am pleased with the new look of your magazine, and especially with the increased environmental focus and presentation of critical thought...

...in reference to the Mt Barney article (*Wild* no 95)...I did some bushwalking and wilderness camping on and around that mountain early last year...it was very hot and humid with many mosquitoes around. Ten days after that particular trip...I came down with a very severe case of Ross River Fever...

It seems that the general public consensus is that Ross River Fever is not a concern that far south in Queensland. I contracted it either in the region of Mt Barney or somewhere else in that south-east region...Interestingly enough, I have since learned that it is possible to contract it all over Australia—even in parts of Victoria and Tasmania...I feel I am on a bit of a mission now to try to warn as many people as I can...

Elizabeth Lescheid
Queenstown, Tas

I disagree with the fact that...Mt Barney is Queensland's toughest mountain ('A Mt Barney adventure', *Wild* no 95). Although I did find the mountain challenging I believe that Mt Peter Botte is a lot more challenging and extremely tough...if you approach it from Cape Tribulation, up to Mt Sorrow (this mountain is tough enough) and then up and along to the summit of Mt Peter Botte.

Joddee Gray
Launceston, Tas

Readers' letters are welcome (with sender's full name and address for verification). A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Write to *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahara, Vic 3181 or email editorial@wild.com.au



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Groin, Grunt and Gurkhas

Melbourne trailwalker a record breaker

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The event-winning Gurkhas (088) and defending champions Return of the Groin Sprains (001) stride out from the start of the Melbourne Trailwalker. Martin Wurt

The 2005 Melbourne Trailwalker set Australian records, with 1672 walkers beginning the walk in 418 teams of four. Despite 30°C temperatures and strong winds, at least one team member from 97 per cent of teams completed the 100 kilometre event, and an impressive 57 per cent of complete teams finished.

Seven teams jostled for top position, with The Queen's Gurkha Signals Regiment pulling ahead in the latter stages to regain their title in 12 hours, 39 minutes. Second were 8 Feet Under who finished in 13 hours, 41 minutes; and 11 minutes behind them were Grunt. Defending champions Return of the Groin Sprains started strong-

ly and led for much of the event, but slowed in the final stages to finish fourth. The first all-women team, Club 18, finished in 16 hours, 16 minutes to set a new Australian record. At the other end of the field, Team 4759 arrived at the summit of Mt Donna Buang with only 47 minutes to spare before the 48-hour cut-off.

Budawang's bushwalking and camping plan

Roger Lembit outlines the draft strategy for New South Wales's favourite bushwalking destination

The NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service has released for public comment a draft strategy for walking and camping in the Budawang's. The strategy has been the subject of much debate within NSW bushwalking clubs as the Budawang's is an icon area for NSW bushwalkers. Located within Morton National Park, the area has been rated as the favourite bushwalking destination in the State.

NPWS is seeking to reduce the environmental impact of large numbers of visitors

in popular regions while maximising wilderness experiences in other parts of the Budawang's. The draft strategy identifies the special conservation values of the area, the patterns and impacts of visitor use and options to reduce these impacts. Proposals discussed are the introduction of a permit system during peak periods, a ban on camping in certain caves, the establishment of fuel-stove-only areas and limits on tent numbers at popular camping places.

Whilst some bushwalkers have expressed horror at the proposed regulations, the majority seem to accept that the present high level of use is unsustainable and that steps need to be taken to ensure the Budawang's are not loved to death.

Comments on the strategy need to be made to the South Coast regional office of NPWS by 29 July 2005. The draft strategy is at: www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/npws.nsf/Content/MortonNP_budawang_strategy_draft

Wild Diary

Wild Diary listings provide information about rucksack-sports events and instruction courses run by non-commercial organisations. Send items for publication to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahara, Vic 3181. Email editorial@wild.com.au

June

- 16 CCCC Summer Series NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
 Race 8 **C**
- 18 Australian Mountain Running Championships **BR** ACT ijgharding@bigpond.com
- 18 MWKC NSW Winter Marathon Series Race 4 **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
- 18-19 LHCCC South-east Series Race 2 **C** Qld www.canoeqld.org.au
- 18-19 NWCC Southern Series Race 2 **C** Qld www.canoeqld.org.au
- 18-19 Schools/Scouts 2 x 6 hr **R** Vic www.vra.rogaine.asn.au
- 18-19 Winter 24 hr State Championships **R** WA www.wa.rogaine.asn.au
- 19 Vic Marathon Winter Series Race 4 **C** Vic www.canoevic.org.au
- 19 Wildwater Race 3 **C** WA www.wa.canoe.org.au
- 19 Paddy Palin 6 hr **R** NSW www.nswrogaining.org
- 25-26 State Championships ACT www.act.rogaine.asn.au

July

- 3 CCCC Winter Series Race 1 **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
- 3 FCC Northern Series Race 3 **C** Qld www.canoeqld.org.au
- 3 Wildwater Race 4 **C** WA www.wa.canoe.org.au
- 3-6 National Outdoor Conference **Co** www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au/conference
- 4 State Mountain Running Championships **BR** Qld (07) 3378 4183
- 10 LCRK NSW Winter Marathon Series Race 5 **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
- 16 School Marathon Championships Qld www.canoeqld.org.au
- 16 6/12 hr **R** Qld www.qldrogaine.asn.au/qraonline
- 16-17 State Championships NT www.nt.rogaine.asn.au
- 17 Shalhaven King of the Mountain **BR** NSW (02) 4421 3849
- 17 Northern Marathon Series Race 4 **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
- 17 LHCCC South-east Series Race 3 **C** Qld www.canoeqld.org.au
- 17 Vic Marathon Winter Series Race 5 **C** Vic www.canoevic.org.au
- 17 Wildwater Race 5 **C** WA www.wa.canoe.org.au
- 23 Wildwater Country Series Race 1 **C** Vic www.canoevic.org.au
- 23 North Queensland Upside Down **R** Qld www.qldrogaine.asn.au/qraonline
- 23 8 hr **R** Vic www.vra.rogaine.asn.au
- 23-24 State Championships SA <http://sa.rogaine.asn.au>
- 24 State Mountain Running Championships **BR** Qld (07) 3378 4183
- 30 Bush Capital Marathon and Ultra **BR** ACT ijgharding@bigpond.com
- 31 Warrumbungle National Park Marathon **BR** NSW amber079@bigpond.com
- 31 CCCC Winter Series Race 2 **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
- 31 Vic Marathon Winter Series Race 5 **C** Vic www.canoevic.org.au

August

- 6 Wildwater Country Series Race 2 **C** WA www.canoevic.org.au
- 6 6 hr **R** WA www.karratha.com.au/nwrogaining
- 6 Australia/New Zealand Cup **S** NSW www.hopnet.com.au
- 6 Hotham to Dinner Plain Pub to Pub **S** Vic www.hopnet.com.au

- 7 SSCC Twin Rivers Marathon **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
- 7 Northern Series Race 4 **C** Qld www.canoeqld.org.au
- 7 State School-age Championships **R** Qld www.qldrogaine.asn.au/qraonline
- 7 3 hr **R** Qld www.qldrogaine.asn.au/qraonline
- 10 KAC Cross-country Classic **S** NSW www.hopnet.com.au
- 13 CCCC NSW Winter Marathon Series Race 6 **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
- 13 Snowy Mountains Classic **S** NSW www.hopnet.com.au
- 13-14 Australia/New Zealand Cup **S** NZ www.hopnet.com.au
- 14 KKK Kinarri Downriver Race 3 **C** Vic www.canoevic.org.au
- 14 Vic Marathon Winter Series Race 7 **C** Vic www.canoevic.org.au
- 14 Metrogaine 6 hr **R** ACT www.act.rogaine.asn.au
- 17 NWCC Southern Series Race 3 **C** Qld www.canoeqld.org.au
- 20 Mt Wilson to Bilpin Bush Run **BR** NSW www.blpinbushrun.com.au
- 20 Great Pyramid Race **BR** Qld www.pyramidrace.com.au
- 20 Lake Macquarie 6/12 hr **R** NSW www.nswrogaining.org
- 20 Snogaine **R** Vic www.vra.rogaine.asn.au
- 20-21 LHCCC South-east Series Race 4 **C** Qld www.canoeqld.org.au
- 20-21 Spring 24 hr **R** WA <http://wa.rogaine.asn.au>
- 20-21 Australia/New Zealand Cup **S** NSW www.hopnet.com.au
- 21 Northern Marathon Series Race 5 **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
- 21 CCCC Winter Series Race 3 **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
- 21 State 5 & 10 km Championships **C** Vic www.canoevic.org.au
- 21 Rocky Valley Rush **S** Vic www.hopnet.com.au
- 26-28 Sydney Trailwalker **BR** NSW www.ortam.org.au/trailwalker
- 27 Lake Macquarie 6/12 hr **R** NSW www.nswrogaining.org
- 27 Kangaroo Hoppit **S** Vic www.hopnet.com.au
- 27-28 Wildwater State Titles **C** WA www.wa.canoe.org.au
- 28 Vic Marathon Winter Series Race 8 **C** Vic www.canoevic.org.au

September

- 3 Bipeane **R** Qld www.qldrogaine.asn.au/qraonline
- 3-4 Marathon State Championships **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
- 10-11 State Marathon Championships **C** Vic www.canoevic.org.au
- 11 Northern Marathon Series Race 6 **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
- 11 CCCC Winter Series Race 4 **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
- 17 UP Myall River Classic **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
- 17 Nightgaine 5 hr **R** ACT www.act.rogaine.asn.au
- 17 9 hr **R** NT www.nt.rogaine.asn.au
- 17 8 hr Championships **R** Qld www.qldrogaine.asn.au/qraonline
- 17 North Queensland 6/12 hr **R** Qld www.qldrogaine.asn.au/qraonline
- 17-18 AUMC 12/24 hr **R** SA <http://sa.rogaine.asn.au>
- 17-18 State Championships 24 hr **R** Vic www.vra.rogaine.asn.au
- 18 FACC Ted Pace Memorial **C** Vic www.canoevic.org.au
- 24 LPVC NSW Winter Marathon Series Race 7 **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au

- 24-25 Marathon State Championships **C** Qld www.canoeqld.org.au
- 25 World Mountain Running Championships **BR** NZ www.wmr2006.org
- 25 CCCC Winter Series Race 5 **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au

October

- 1 Upper Murray Challenge **M** Vic www.uppermurraychallenge.dragnet.com.au
- 1-2 LHCCC Brisbane Valley 100 **C** Qld www.canoeqld.org.au
- 1-2 BCC Bendigo Cup **C** Vic www.canoevic.org.au
- 8 RC Echua Mini **C** Vic (03) 8327 7706
- 8-9 State Championships 24 hr **R** Tas www.rt.asn.au
- 9 Ororua Valley Classic **BR** NSW ijgharding@bigpond.com
- 15 Metrogaine **R** Qld www.qldrogaine.asn.au/qraonline
- 15 6 hr **R** SA <http://sa.rogaine.asn.au>
- 15 Spring 12 hr **R** WA <http://wa.rogaine.asn.au>
- 15-16 Marathon World Championships **C** WA www.canoe.org.au
- 15-16 State Championships 24 hr **R** NSW www.nswrogaining.org
- 15-16 Veterans Challenge 12 hr **R** Vic www.vra.rogaine.asn.au
- 16 CCCC Winter Series Race 6 **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
- 19 Great Australian Bushwalk **B** www.greataustralianbushwalk.org.au
- 22 RC Barwon Mini **C** Vic (03) 8327 7706
- 23 Brindabella Classic **BR** ACT mick.corlis@twardis.com.au
- 22-23 Hawkesbury Canoe Classic **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
- 30 CCCC Winter Series Race 7 **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
- 29 Oct-1 Nov Bright Four Peaks Race **BR** Vic <http://bright4peaksclimb.netc.net.au>

November

- 5 Two Peaks Classic and Mt Majura Challenge **BR** ACT ijgharding@bigpond.com
- 5 Northern Marathon Series Race 7 **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
- 6 GCC Bridge to Bridge **C** Vic www.canoevic.org.au
- 12 WBCC NSW Winter Marathon Series Race 8 **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
- 12 Spring 6/12 hr **R** ACT www.act.rogaine.asn.au
- 12 Minigaine 3 hr **R** SA <http://sa.rogaine.asn.au>
- 19-20 GWCC Twin Rivers Classic **C** Vic www.canoevic.org.au
- 20 CCCC Winter Series Race 8 **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
- 26 SHCC Swan Hill Murray Classic **C** Vic www.canoevic.org.au
- 27 Socialgaine 6 hr **R** NSW www.nswrogaining.org

December

- 3 Ben Ward Memorial 30 Vic www.canoevic.org.au
- 11 CCCC Race and Christmas Party **C** NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
- 18 Tour de Mountain **BR** ACT mick.corlis@twardis.com.au
- 27-31 RC Murray Marathon **C** Vic (03) 8327 7706

February 2006

- 4 Cradle Mountain Run **BR** Tas sue.drake@trump.net.au
- 11-12 Upside Down 12 hr **R** WA www.wa.rogaine.asn.au

March

- 11 Autumn 6 hr **R** WA www.wa.rogaine.asn.au

Activities: **B** bushwalking, **BR** bush running, **C** canoeing, **Co** conference, **M** multisports, **R** rogaining, **S** skiing **Organisations:** **BCC** Bendigo Canoe Club **CCCC** Central Coast Canoe Club **FACC** Footscray Amateur Canoe Club **PCC** Fitzroy Canoe Club **GCC** Geelong Canoe Club **GWCC** Gippsland Waters Canoe Club **JP** Just Paddlers **KKK** Kinarri Kayak Club **LCRK** Lane Cove River Kayakers **LHCCC** Lourdes Hill College Canoe Club **LPVC** Little Pilli Kayak Club **MWKC** Manly Warringham Kayak Club **NWCC** Newport Waters Canoe Club **RC** Red Cross **SHCC** Swan Hill Canoe Club **SSCC** Sutherland Shire Canoe Club **WBCC** Wagga Bidgee Canoe Club **Rogaining** events are organised by the State rogaining associations. **Canoeing** events are organised by the State canoeing associations unless otherwise stated



Bumper season for Aussie cross-country ski team

Finn Marsland reports

The recent winter season in Europe was possibly the best ever—the Australian team contested more World Cup races than ever before, had the largest team at the World Championships since 1993 and, most importantly, produced our best results in many different areas.

The biggest milestone was scoring Australia's first World Cup points. Paul Murray placed 29th in the World Cup sprint in Germany at the beginning of February, our first time in the world's top thirty. At the World Championships in Germany seven athletes qualified, with Murray placing 31st in the sprint—Australia's best individual result at a cross-country skiing World Championships. In other events Ben Derrick was the fastest Australian in the men's 15 kilometre event, Clare-Louise Brumley, competing in her first World Championships, impressed with 53rd place in the ten kilometre

and 49th in the pursuit, and Esther Bottomley skied a solid race to be 51st in the women's sprint. In the men's team sprint, the Ben Sim and Murray combination held off Switzerland on the last lap to take eighth place. Overall the Championships were a moderate success—everyone is motivated to be fitter and stronger at the next one.

Outside world-level competition Australian skiers really began to make their mark. Bottomley won a FIS Swiss Cup sprint in Feutersony and made finals in three other Swiss Cup events, as well as taking a bronze medal at the Austrian Championships. Other Australian skiers including KT Calder, Sim, and Brumley also made the podium in FIS international events in Switzerland, Austria and Italy. In Sweden Murray established himself as a contender in all the national-level sprint competitions, making the finals in every competition and ending

up fourth overall in the Swedish Sprint Cup. Our long-distance specialist Ben Derrick only made a short trip to Europe and was ill in the first week but still managed to come fourth in the 50 kilometre free-style event at the König-Ludwig Lauf, Germany's Worldloppet race, despite falling and breaking a pole at the start.

These results are all relative: Australian cross-country skiers are still a long way from winning World Cup medals. However, we are finally beginning to earn some respect on the world stage. Next step—2006 Winter Olympics in Torino, Italy.

Paul Murray in the Bern World Cup in Switzerland, one of three city-sprint events held last season.

Esther Bottomley

BUSHWALKING TRACKS

Openings, closures, fires and fees

The recent 'controlled burn' at Victoria's Wilsons Promontory eventually burnt 7000 hectares and closed the National Park for 18 days (see Green Pages for more details). Toilet blocks and tracks were burnt, along with the bush and its inhabitants, although the historical lighthouse and other buildings were saved. Many areas were still closed nearly a month after the fires including Mt Oberon summit and car park, Sealers Cove, Refuge Cove, Waterloo Bay, Little Oberon Bay, Oberon Bay, Telegraph Track, access to the lighthouse, and South East Track. These areas may be closed for some time; for further information about track closures, visit www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Grant Dixon reports that lightning from thunderstorms sparked several fires in south-west Tasmania on 26 January. Two fires

were near popular walking areas—one east of New River Lagoon, the other above the Huon Gorge, close to the Razorback and Arthur Plains. Due to concerns about the safety of bushwalkers should the fires spread, the Parks & Wildlife Service closed several major walking tracks including the South Coast, Western Arthurs, Arthur Plains and Huon (Yo-yo) tracks. A helicopter was used to check tracks for walkers and, in some cases, shuttle them out of the area. The South Coast Track was reopened after a week but the other tracks were closed for two weeks. Ultimately, both fires burnt only about 400 hectares of mainly buttongrass country each although the Huon Gorge fire was still smouldering in peat some six weeks later.

More details about the booking system for the Overland Track were released in

April. Walking the track will cost \$100 during the peak tourist season, from November–April, with the money raised used for track maintenance. There will also be a new booking system to regulate the use of the track during this time.

The last leg of the 260 kilometre Great Dividing Track was opened in February with the Governor of Victoria, John Landy, presiding over the event, scissors at the ready. The Track follows the top of the Great Dividing Range from Bacchus Marsh (near Melbourne) to Daylesford, from where it can be followed to Ballarat or Bendigo. The Track consists of four major sections which can be easily reached for shorter walks and is said to explore gold-rush heritage and natural beauty. Further information on the walk can be found at www.gdt.org.au

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Those crazy Tasmanians...

Cradle Mountain Run and Three Peaks Race round-ups

The Cradle Mountain Run celebrated its 25th anniversary on 5 February with 54 people starting the event. Matt Dalziel, winner of the event, said, 'this is a nice reminder that people have enjoyed hurting themselves outdoors in the name of endurance...for many years and adventure racing is merely the latest manifestation'. The 82 kilometre run follows the full length of the Overland Track, entailing vertical change similar to that from Mt Kosciuszko to the coast. According to Dalziel, the 17 kilometres along Lake St Clair are the real test of character as there are few reference points but many slippery myrtle roots that break both rhythm and spirits. Cynthia Bay was reached by 50 runners, 'an outstanding achievement considering the increased track damage from lots of walkers and cuts to track work'.

Dalziel finished the run in just over eight hours, followed by Allan Hood and Patrick Micken. Eighteen-year-old national orienteering representative Hanny Allston was the first woman home, finishing in less than ten hours to come fourth overall.

Three marathons in three days is a tough ask; a combined 2646 metres of ascent on three mountain peaks adds to the difficulty. And if all your non-running hours are spent bouncing around the ocean on a small yacht then you've got a real challenge—the Three Peaks Race.

Terry Travers reports that the race is held every Easter, with teams consisting of two runners and three or more sailors. After an overnight sail from Beauty Point in northern Tasmania to Lady Barron on Flinders Island the teams make the 65 kilometre run to the top of Mt Strzelecki and back. The runners have a full day to recover while they sail 145 nautical miles down the east coast to Freycinet National Park, where 33 kilometres of narrow tracks and the imposing Mt Freycinet await. At the Coles Bay jetty runners leap back on board their yacht for the final 100 nautical mile sail to Hobart and the 35 kilometre ascent of the city's 1270 metre backdrop massif, Mt Wellington.

The team aboard catamaran *Elite Renovations* including Tasmanian runners Mark Guy and Paul McKenzie were the overall winners. The King of the Mountains title, awarded to the team of two



Above, Tim Piper (front) and Patrick Micken toiling up the track at Freycinet Peninsula, Tasmania, during the Three Peaks Race. Paul

Scambler. Left, Hanny Allston, first woman home in the Cradle Mountain Run, competing in the 2004 World Orienteering Championships in Sweden. Bob Moatt



runners who complete all three peaks in the fastest time, was awarded to Tasmanian Tim Piper and NSW's Patrick Micken of *Jailhouse Grill*. Their combined run time for the 133 kilometres was just over 14 hours. Further details can be found at www.threepikes.org.au

SCROGGIN

Fast, fit female

The 'major bushwalking challenge' of the Three Peaks traverse, the Blue Mountains, NSW, (see article in *Wild* no 69) had a number of firsts in January. Australian Capital Territory's Emma Murray completed a solo traverse in 23 hours and 40 minutes, making both the first solo woman's traverse and the first traverse by a woman in less than 24 hours. The trip was measured from Katoomba Station to Katoomba Station, and followed a previous trip of less than 48 hours, with a partner.

Murray followed this up in March by being the first woman across the line in the Six Foot Track Marathon, finishing the 45 kilometre race in 3 hours, 44 minutes. She finished in eighth place overall.

Australian expedition to New Zealand cave

Stephen Bunton reports that a caving mini-expedition by members of the Victorian Speleological Association and Southern Tasmanian Caversners to Mt Owen near Nelson in New Zealand's South Island succeeded in extending Viceroy Shaft to -513 metres. In January 1999, members of VSA first explored the cave to a depth of -415 metres, making it New Zealand's seventh deepest cave (see *Wild* no 75). It retains this position but is still going. The current exploration concentrates on finding a lower entrance in order to reduce the commuting time to the sharp end and avoid the loose, frost-shattered rock in the entrance series.

Circumnavigation of the Island State

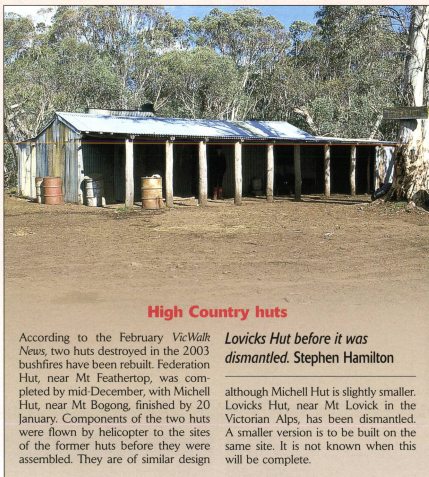
In December 2004 Trys Morris, Gemma Rawlings and Justine Curgenvin (all from the UK) became the first women continuously to circumnavigate Tasmania. The 1350 kilometre sea-kayaking trip took them 37 days, with head winds and six metre swells their biggest challenge. Curgenvin is a film maker with Cackle TV Productions (see Reviews) and the trip will feature in her next documentary.

Bushwalker death in Victorian Alps

Victorian bushwalker Paul Goette died after falling down a cliff on Helicopter Spur near Mt Howitt in April, as reported in the *Herald Sun* on 13 April. He was an experienced walker who had done the walk many times before. The exact cause of the fall has not been determined.

Canoeing World Championships

The Australian marathon canoe teams for the World Championships in Perth later this year have been announced. Victorians



High Country huts

According to the February *VicWalk* News, two huts destroyed in the 2003 bushfires have been rebuilt. Federation Hut, near Mt Feathertop, was completed by mid-December, with Michell Hut, near Mt Bogong, finished by 20 January. Components of the two huts were flown by helicopter to the sites of the former huts before they were assembled. They are of similar design

Lovicks Hut before it was dismantled. Stephen Hamilton

although Michell Hut is slightly smaller. Lovicks Hut, near Mt Lovick in the Victorian Alps, has been dismantled. A smaller version is to be built on the same site. It is not known when this will be complete.

Michael Leverett, Trevor Murray and Ross MacDonald will compete in the K1 event, with the latter two also competing as a K2 team against Bennett Maxwell and David Provan. Erin O'Keeffe and Lisa Thiele are to compete individually in the women's K1 event, and as a team in the K2. The World Championships will be held on the weekend of 15-16 October.

Development in the Grampians

A \$6.3 million accommodation, shopping and restaurant complex is planned for Halls Gap, Victoria, with a planning permit application already lodged with the Northern Grampians Shire Council. The five-star resort complex would include 25 hotel suites with beds for up to 200 people, four shops, restaurant/café/tavern, car park, pool and barbecue area. The proposed site is on the corner of Hemley Court and Grampians Road and would be 'built with materials complementing the natural beauty of the Grampians'.

80th ascent of Mt Aspiring

In March Geoff Wyatt, *Wild* contributor and director of Mountain Recreation in Wanaka, New Zealand, made a record 80th ascent of Mt Aspiring (3028 metres). Wyatt

first climbed Mt Aspiring in the mid-1960s! See *Wild* no 21 for an interview with the Tasmanian-born guide.

Competing for 'the Dragon Skin'

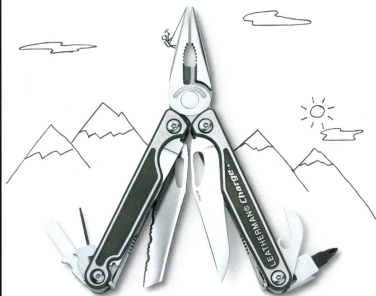
The annual Dragon Skin event, a four-day initiative and bushwalking challenge for Venturers (Scouts from 14-17 years of age), was held over Easter in the Belanglo State Forest south of Sydney. Eight hundred and twenty Venturers and their gear were dropped into the forest on Easter Friday with a map and list of coordinates of four camp-sites and 52 activities. The 163 teams navigated through the forest, completing activities for points and camping at different sites each night. 🐉

CORRECTIONS AND AMPLIFICATIONS

The MSR Zoid 2 has two vestibules and fly entrances rather than one as stated on page 65 of *Wild* no 96.

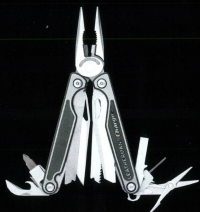
Readers' contributions to this department, including high-resolution digital photos or colour slides, are welcome. Items of less than 200 words are more likely to be published. Send them to *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181 or email editorial@wild.com.au

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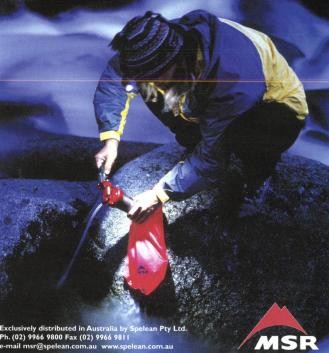


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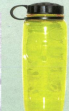


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ENDURING HEROES

Quentin Chester
reflects on the life
of Hurley

IN THE WINTER OF 1898 YOUNG Frank Hurley did a runner. The 13-year-old fled to the Blue Mountains, the craggy horizons of which had been beckoning to him from the attic window of his Sydney home. So (as the story goes) began a rollicking career of travels and exploits. It would eventually take Hurley south on epic Antarctic expeditions with Mawson and Shackleton. He would journey deep into the wilds of New Guinea and be in the thick of it during both World Wars. Along the way there were excursions closer to home, from Cape York to Frenchmans Cap and countless places in between.

Apart from the heartiest of appetites for adventure, this was a life driven by an eye for nature and a red-hot passion for the new art of photography. Others may have shown more creative flair or exacting technique with a camera, but nobody did more than Frank Hurley to capture on film the pulse of a dramatic moment. Decades before the fashion for wilderness and adventure photography he was dangling from ropes, braving blizzards and sprinting to catch the light. He was a true pioneer, anyone with an intrepid bone in their body should give thanks for his life.

Some 85 years after Hurley, Alasdair McGregor, a young Sydney architect, embarked on his version of truancy by joining the 1983 expedition to Heard Island, Australia's castaway volcano in the distant waters of the sub-Antarctic. It was a wild ride—just the sort of boots-and-all adventure in which Hurley would have revelled. For McGregor, Heard Island was a liberating, life-turning event. From this time forward he would develop a new career delving into distant, outlandish places.

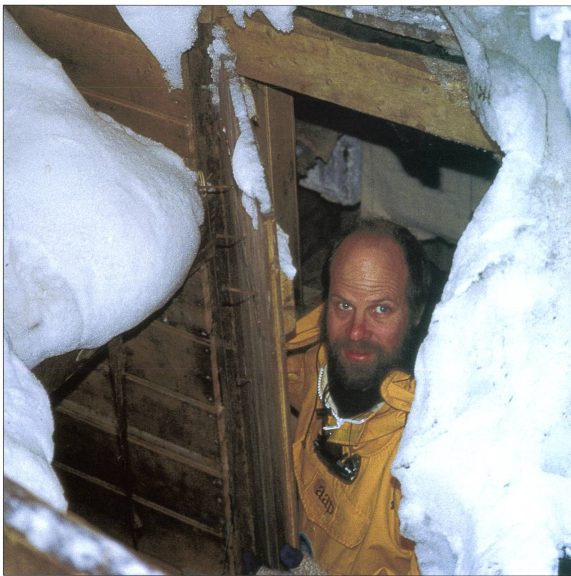
Like Hurley, McGregor roved far and wide: from tropical isles and the stone country of Kakadu and the Kimberley to the highlands of Fiji, and bushwalks deep into the forest and escarpment reaches of New South Wales. But all the time the compass of McGregor's imagination has kept swinging back to the distant south. He went on to make several

voyages to the Antarctic, including a series of expeditions to Cape Denison to help with conservation work on Mawson's Hut. On these pilgrimages he was shadowed by the legendary figure of Hurley and his haunting images of life on the ice from eight decades earlier.

McGregor himself is blessed with preternatural visual skills. A gifted painter, he has produced an extraordinary range of work detailing wild splendour and all its intimate, unruly, incidental beauty. His brand of lavish realism sidles past the conventions of landscape painting to get under the skin of a place. When they appear at all, horizons and vistas are usually muted backdrops. Fore-

grounds rule, with looming rock outcrops, massed fronds, debris and spurts of wild-flower colour. On the larger canvases you are treated not to scenes, but to the kind of startling, raw-nature-in-your-face moments into which bushwalkers and explorers happily stumble.

Over the years photography has become an important ally in McGregor's response to place. This is especially true in the Antarctic where the raging elements and overwhelming ice-scapes challenge any artist—even before they try to pick up a paintbrush while wearing mittens. Not that wielding a camera is much easier. During his weeks spent at Cape Denison, McGregor's efforts



Alasdair McGregor at the door of the darkroom, Mawson's Hut, Cape Denison, Antarctica. Malcolm Ludgate

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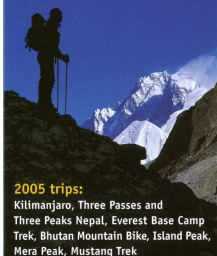
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at photography in and around Mawson's Hut deepened his respect for Hurley's dedication in the face of jostling winds and incessant cold. Even more moving was the experience of helping to clear away the snow and ice and finally entering the photographer's cubicle-sized darkroom deep in the hut itself.

From the experience of this cramped but hallowed space the germ of an idea gradually took hold. Now, almost a decade later, McGregor has completed the biography *Frank Hurley: A Photographer's Life*. Given the confluence of their interests and travels McGregor's mission is perhaps not surprising. But, then again, why would an accomplished artist put his vocation on hold and spend several years rummaging through somebody's past?

Personally, I can think of no person better qualified to do the job. But then I'm hopelessly biased. Alasdair McGregor is an old friend and co-author of mine. I first met him in Port Adelaide on the eve of his departure for Heard Island. Back then he had the absent-minded appearance of a schoolboy looking for the right platform. When I went to live in Sydney later, I got to know him better and we spent many days bush-walking in the Blue Mountains and beyond.

I soon came to realise that McGregor's air of an 'innocent abroad' was a buffer for an acute sensibility. Similarly, his often faltering walking style came from an intensity of gaze, his eyes drawn to the ever-changing compositions the bush provided. It still seems miraculous to me that out of our weekends rambling around Sydney's sandstone hinterland McGregor was so readily able to grab the essence of a place. He would pull sketch paper from his grubby red Macpac and with a few quick pen strokes dash together the inspiration for a major work covering several square metres of canvas.

Though McGregor's art is an emotional response to the natural sightings at one level, his work is also informed by learning and respect. If he paints a rainforest he will have studied the place, its history, flora and fauna. In many ways his methods and sympathies are more in step with the gentlemanly naturalist explorers of the 19th century than contemporaries dancing to the tune of post-deconstructed art theory.

For anyone with an eye for wild marvels, history and adventure, Antarctica is almost irresistible. Names like Amundsen, Mawson, Scott and Shackleton evoke a very different age and another entire realm of experience. Their daring and ambition in the face of the

most implacable terrain on earth is remarkable. Though driven by ideals that ring hollow to the modern ear, it is impossible to deny the courage and sacrifice of these leaders and the men who followed them into the unknown.

Exploration has always been fertile ground for exceptional people and extraordinary deeds. Once they were called heroes. Alas, pop culture has pummeled this word out of shape. Now we have legends, icons and a cast of ironical superheroes. And, apart from a few exceptions from the battlefields of war and sport, Australians are particularly touchy about the notion of being branded heroic.

It gets worse when it comes to adventure pastimes. Apart from Bob Brown and a few people who have climbed Mt Everest, the phrase outdoors heroes might as well be an oxymoron. This is a pity, given the important role heroes play in our stories and history. Without them the outdoors becomes a stage with a story but no actors for the leading roles. We should all rejoice that the bush is spared the tacky cult of celebrity. However, perhaps there is danger in being too earnestly egalitarian and self-effacing.

As a youth I innocently devoured books like Apsley Cherry-Garrard's *The Worst Journey in the World*, the story of Captain Scott *et al*, and Leonard Bickel's *This Accursed Land* with its account of Mawson's slog back to Cape Denison. In the decades since, forests have

been felled rewriting Antarctic history and putting the analytical boot into various expeditions. In the end, I'm not much bothered with dissecting leadership styles, groups' capabilities, and endless arguments about what went wrong. By all means show me the feet of clay but most of all, tell me what happened. As I see it anybody who put themselves up for the voyage south—let alone joined a sledging party—is a champion.

More recently there has been a surge of interest—particularly in the USA—in the voyage of the *Endurance*. The saga of Shackleton and his men, the dramatic loss of their ship and their epic escape to South Georgia has been reinvented as a parable of human survival. For all Shackleton's character flaws or his lack of significant achievement as a polar explorer, what will always resonate loudest is the stirring, heroic narrative.

Given all this, the publication of *Frank Hurley: A Photographer's Life* is timely. As McGregor suggests, it is doubtful whether the *Endurance* revival would have gathered

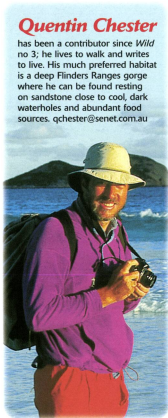
much steam in the modern, visual age were it not for Hurley's amazing photographs. While the spotlight will always be brighter on the charismatic Shackleton, others, including Hurley, deserve much recognition. In some ways McGregor's book about Hurley's life stands as an act of solidarity with a kindred spirit, a fellow artist who spent so many hours crafting a record of place and moment.

Though keen to convey the sweep of the man's life and work, McGregor's approach is hardly uncritical. Over the course of the book Hurley emerges as a self-styled showman, someone who often shuffled the facts to aid his cause. As one colleague observed of him: 'No moment is ordinary or mundane. No drama is sufficient in itself but must be embellished.' This ingenuity with the truth split into his work. It was Hurley's practice occasionally to doctor images, merging two or more negatives to heighten the drama. While the results offended some who were sticklers for accuracy, there is no doubting the impact of these composite images, their power to suggest a larger narrative truth.

Hurley's dealings and interactions with others were often difficult. His relationship with the likes of Shackleton and Mawson frequently faltered over business arrangements. Nor did he feel that he was treated fairly by officialdom. Even Hurley's family life was problematic, especially given his long absences from home. These strains give some glimpse of the man behind all the headlong adventuring. Nevertheless, throughout this biography there is a feeling that the real Frank Hurley is always standing somewhere just off-stage.

As McGregor ruefully points out, Hurley's diaries and letters reveal little of his inner life. Perhaps the sheer tempo of his workload and travels left him no time for reflection. It's as if he needed to conserve emotional energy for his solitary hours in the darkroom and the physical demands of hauling his cumbersome cameras into the right place at the right time. And perhaps, seeing himself as a lone warrior and facing the necessity to fire up for each new day, Hurley drew strength from tinkering with his life story as though adjusting his armour before going in to fight against injustices—be they real or imagined.

But this is speculation. These days everyone dabbles in psychology and analysis. There is the risk of being too clever, of overexposing individuals so that they fade right off the page. McGregor is careful to keep an even light on Hurley's achievements and the times he lived in. Of his courage and creative commitment there can be no question. But what really stands out is his singular willingness to confront some of the most daunting frontiers of experience the world has ever known—and return with images that will live forever. His life might be a composite, yet, by any measure, Frank Hurley is one of our enduring heroes. 



Quentin Chester

has been a contributor since *Wild* no 3; he lives to walk and writes to live. His much preferred habitat is a deep Flinders Ranges gorge where he can be found resting on sandstone close to cool, dark waterholes and abundant food sources. qchester@senet.com.au

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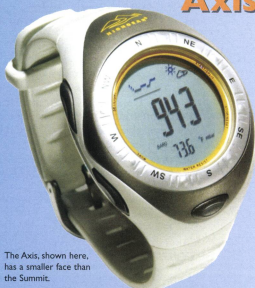
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Tasmania's South Coast

Jaqui Hewitt-Taylor follows beaches, climbs mountains and wallows in glorious mud in Tasmania's remote south

THE SOUTH COAST TRACK IS DEEP IN THE Tasmanian wilderness. Beyond it are the ocean and Antarctica. If you want to see dense, unspoiled forest beside deserted beaches, with a Tasmanian devil thrown in for good measure, this is your bushwalk.

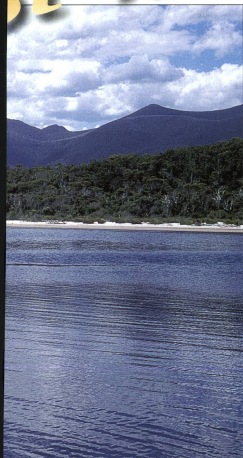
The inaccessibility that makes the South Coast Track so perfect begins at once. There are only two ways to get to the walk's starting-point at Melaleuca: you can walk in on the Port Davey track (six or seven days), or fly in by light aircraft. We chose the latter. At Melaleuca you must sign a bushwalking register. Signing in and out lets the rangers know who is on the track and, more importantly, alerts them if you fail to emerge within the usual period of time. We had estimated that the walk would take us seven days but we carried enough supplies for eight just in case. There are water crossings on the South Coast Track that are impassable after significant rainfall—your only option is to wait until the water-level falls and waiting without adequate food wouldn't be much fun!



Precipitous Bluff looms in the background as Dave Gairns and Ros Murphy make the rowing-boat crossing of New River Lagoon. Chris Baxter.
Below, the idyllic 'suntrap' of Deadmans Bay. John Chapman



st Track



our seven-day noodle diet. The two main dietary considerations on the Track are to find fresh water and to use a possum-proof bag to store your food overnight. Apart from the damage human food does to possums, losing your food supply in the wilderness would be very unfortunate!

The second day's target was the Louisa River, estimated to be five to seven hours' of moderately easy walking with the Red Point Hills crossed about halfway. The guidebooks to the South Coast Track focus on walking time as the terrain often makes distance an unreliable indicator of progress. A kilometre can take an hour if you sink into thigh-deep mud with every step! A stroll along the beach soon gave way to button grass which engulfed us, hiding the ocean from view until we reached higher ground. The track became a thin, intermittently flooded line of mud and our gaiters came into their own.

The Tasmanian Government requests walkers to wade through even the murkiest depths as attempting to clamber around the quagmire will extend its width. Opinions differ whether lengthening the boardwalk on

about the pristine ocean and the untouched bush. After hours of crossing creeks and wading through moderate mud we reached the Louisa River. It was now only thigh deep, with a strong current. The stones underfoot meant that those without sandals had to wade through in their boots—after the mud, getting our boots wet was no hardship, simply a change in the degree of damp.

When we had found suitable sites for our tents, we prepared for an early morning departure across the Ironbound Range. The Ironbounds are probably the toughest part of the track—seven to ten hours of hard walking—but the views make this the most rewarding part of the walk. The scenery in this section is the reason why some people complete the South Coast Track more than once; one of the rangers we met at Lake St Clair had walked it three times for this reason! Once, just for the fun of it, her group took costumes and dressed as variations on 'Priscilla, Queen of the Desert' at the peak. Carrying seven days' supplies and fancy dress on the South Coast Track shows a special type of character!

■ We reached flat ground and serious mud: it was deep and jelly-like, with enough resistance to make it hard to escape but too thin to make more than a token effort at holding your weight. ■

The principally pom party of four adults (Peter, Eddie, Ann and myself) and two thirteen-year-olds (Ben and Ash) began the track with an easy three-hour walk from Melaleuca to Point Eric camp-site. (The term 'camp-site' is used loosely on the South Coast Track—it is a traditional stopping place, without facilities except the occasional established hole for a toilet.) Setting off with light steps, we traipsed through scrub and tussocky button grass, encircled by mountains, commenting cheerfully on our superfluous gaiters. Rounding the base of the New Harbour Range, we reached Cox Bight Beach and met our first fellow walkers. They were going in the opposite direction and their khaki clothing and bush hats were in stark contrast to our bright, fleecy attire.

Rain held us up for a couple of days at the Louisa River, the taller of the two commented. 'Water-level's fine now though, just up to here.' He indicated the level of my waist, clarifying what the typical Australian bushwalker considers acceptable for a no-whinging river-crossing.

Bidding them farewell, we crossed an expanse of beach before re-entering the bush and arriving at Point Eric camp-site. A nearby creek provided fresh water and we began

the muddiest parts of the track would reduce environmental impact: some claim that it would put an end to the inevitable activities of mud haters whilst others argue that more boardwalk would attract more walkers, leading to the loss of the track's wilderness nature. A lushly bearded German gentleman held forth on this topic with particular vehemence, declaring his hatred of boardwalk, track registers, rangers and anything else that he thought impinged upon the freedom and risk of the wilderness.

We squelched on for an hour or so before climbing the Red Point Hills. The terrain became dry, the effort of moving mud replaced by that of climbing uphill. We munched scroggin and gave the boys a cheerfully optimistic version of how far it was to the Louisa River, before explaining that although the adults were of unsound mind (evidenced by suggesting a seven-day walk as a holiday activity!) this was no reason to attempt to flash an SOS signal to a distant boat. Despairing of their fate, Ash and Ben resigned themselves to snaking round the summits of the Spica Hills while listening to the adults exclaiming

As there aren't any suitable places for camping between the Louisa River and Deadmans Bay, we were committed to the full day's walk. Early the next morning we set off for views of mountains, ocean, bush and, if we were lucky, curiously dressed fellow walkers. From the base of the Ironbound Range the ascent does not look especially daunting. However, the climb is relentless but with fantastic views, supporting my claim that I was having photo breaks, not breathing stops. After a couple of false summits we reached the 360 degree view of coastline, peaks and untouched wilderness that we had been promised. It was awesome. Without costumes to slip into, we carried on after a rather tame photography session.

The descent began gently, but just as we entered dense forest the path became steep, rocky, and thick with mud and roots. Every step had to be tested before committing yourself to the squelchiness below your boot. It was mentally and physically taxing, and we made slow progress, but I felt confident that our German friend would have rejoiced in it.



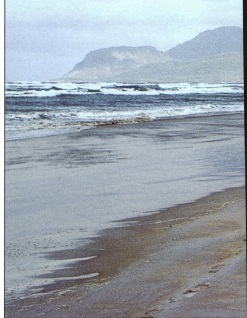
Eight hours after setting off, we reached flat ground and serious mud: it was deep and jelly-like, with enough resistance to make it hard to escape but too thin to make more than a token effort at holding your weight. It came up to my thighs and there was no way round it. Unless you had a machete the surrounding bush was pretty much impenetrable, regardless of your environmental stance. Then it began to rain, leaving us to attempt the interesting manoeuvre of sinking into the mud while simultaneously pulling waterproofs from our packs. Finally, just as I was wondering how far the final kilometre could stretch, we arrived at Deadmans Bay. We put up the tents in record time, and dreamed of mud.

Light seeped into the tent and I noticed that the sound of rain was conspicuously absent. Sneaking out cautiously lest the clouds should notice me and return, I found that the beach had become a suntrap: perfect for drying soggy gear. We had planned a rest day but as we had been warned to expect rain for two of every three days on the South Coast Track wasting a fine day resting seemed inexcusable. We decided to walk a couple of kilometres further to Prion Beach, a move

guaranteed to entail a muddy afternoon. However, two days of reasonably easy and mud-free walking were said to follow as compensation. We explained the change of plan to the boys—they declined to comment, shouldering their packs in a 'We're calling the social workers as soon as this is over' manner.

The track took us across white sand to beach-side groves with occasional mud dips to knee level. Towards the end of the day our decision to push ahead was justified, even in the boys' eyes, by the rare sight of a Tasmanian devil scampering into the bush. We descended to Prion Beach and found a suitable camp-site with a freshwater source amongst the dunes. Ben and Ash were determined to see one of the fairy penguins that we had, in the spirit of bribery, suggested might appear. At sunset, with this promise unfulfilled, they commandeered my out-of-range phone and played games whilst the adults watched a technicolored sunset creep across the ocean, sulphur-crested cockatoos wheeling above us.

We paddled barefoot along the three kilometres of Prion Beach in the morning, the ocean marginally wetter but much more soothing than our boots. At the end of the beach the New River Lagoon provides the



only crossing by rowing-boat on the track. There were two boats and the crossing had to be coordinated so that a boat was left on each side for other walkers, a puzzle which led to lively discussions of tactics. Having succeeded in the IQ test of boat crossings, we continued along an undulating path enclosed by ferny bushes and massive, moss-covered gum-trees towards our chosen camp-site at Rocky Plain. By mid-afternoon we were back on the beach and I was trying to cross Milford Creek, Peter urging me on and Ash calling for caution. Even-

the colours clear and brought the leeches out. We collected a good number before the descent to Surprise Beach, the boys simultaneously disgusted and fascinated by them whilst Eddie, not entirely altruistically, lit cigarettes to burn them off. By mid-afternoon we were at Granite Beach where there is a freshwater spring on the beach at low tide. This gave us a rare treat. The water along the track is stained by tannin: perfectly safe to drink but has a slightly off-putting hue. Armed with bottles of clear water, we climbed the small cliff at the far end of the beach to our chosen camp-site, where we were regarded

ever deeper in our favourite medium. By now knee-deep was nothing and we were accustomed to negotiating footholds, rocks, roots and unexpected depths below the surface whilst avoiding overhanging branches, and travelled in slow and slightly unsynchronised contortions. Ben and Ash were now competing to sink deepest, with a Mars Bar at stake for the most submerged. We were five days into the walk and everyone was hallucinating chocolate.

We reached the highest point of the South Cape Range for lunch, and then descended to more moorland. It was no less boggy than in the forest but more predictable. We returned briefly to tree cover in the afternoon, the mud all but gone, and we emerged at the South Cape Bay for our last rivulet crossing of the track and a lucky end to the day. Reports of chest-deep water had reached us but we arrived as the tide was turning and waded across with water at only mid-high. A layer or two of the day's brown slime drifted away to signal the beginning of the end of the walk.

There is a camp-site next to the creek but we continued to the Lion Rock camp-site as planned. Here the curious process of returning to society began. The camp-site is an easy day's walk from Cockle Creek, where the 'real world' of road transport and civilisation begins. It attracts walkers who are free of mud and have paid attention to their hygiene in the past week. There was a dunny with a door and an engaged/vacant sign on it! We felt out of place and formed a grubby and odorous huddle away from the regular campers.

We had got into the habit of focusing on the light and estimated times of tides when planning activities. Now we had a genuine



Walkers head for the Ironbound Range along Prion Beach.
John Chapman. **Left, a camp-site, South Coast Track style.**
This one is at Cox Bight. Chris Baxter

tually I found a route where the deepest point just reached my bum. After paddling along the foreshore for a couple of hundred metres we climbed back into dense button grass and moorland for a couple of hours of muddy scrambling. The Rocky Plains camp-site is a few hundred metres from the main track and many people choose to continue on to Granite Beach but we were opting for a relatively unhurried walk. As it turned out we were rewarded for our lack of walking zeal: the Rocky Plains camp-site had the best view of any we stayed at from the dunny.

We began the seven kilometres to Granite Beach in a slight drizzle the next morning. After sliding through button grass for about an hour we found ourselves amongst huge ferns and old eucalyptus trees, beaches and mountains peeping through. The rain made

with unalarmed curiosity by the resident family of pademelons.

Less than twelve hours later, we began our assault on the South Cape Range, a reputed all-day mud-bath. The first camping area after Granite Beach is six to eight hours away, beside the South Cape Rivulet. Again, it is not distance that is the issue but the weather and terrain. We had planned to walk for seven to nine hours as we had been possessed by an incomprehensible desire to camp two or three kilometres past the South Cape Rivulet at the Lion Rock camp-site.

The day began with a brisk climb in relatively mud-free conditions to the Flat Rock Plain's lookout. Our walking accomplishments to date were set out below us and, with the mud hidden from view, looked a little meagre. For the next few hours we waded



Jaqui Hewitt-Taylor

takes a couple of months off most years to go walking. The rest of the year she works part-time as a lecturer in paediatric critical-care nursing.

headline: the bus to Hobart left at one o'clock and we had to be at Cockle Creek to catch it. The final nine kilometres began along a perfect surfing beach, isolated but not too remote to prevent a surfer appearing carrying only his board, a few tinies and a wide grin. Nine kilometres is nothing when you have something to look forward to. The boys were moving fast, towards what they hoped would be KFC and chocolate.

We arrived at Cockle Creek rather abruptly. I threw off my clothes, donned bathers and ran into the sea. It was freezing cold and gorgeously refreshing, but the sense of jubilation as we finished the South Coast Track was tinged with slight homesickness for the isolation of the bush. 🐾

ALPINE ATMOSPHERE

The **HEART** of the HIGH COUNTRY

Glenn van der Knijff takes a nine-day walk through the Victorian Alps from Mt St Bernard to the Howqua River

IT WAS A RELIEF TO SET OFF ALONG THE TWINS road, leaving the bitumen of the Great Alpine Road behind us. The hours of planning and organisation were over and Tony, Stephen and I strode past Mt St Bernard without a care in the world. It felt good to be walking with warm sun on our backs but we were glad that the day wasn't too hot. The bushfires of January 2003 had swept through this area with devastating ferocity, destroying almost all foliage and ground cover in their path and leaving little shade. Regrowth had been minimal and the sun beat down relentlessly.

Within half an hour we left the fire track and climbed steeply south towards the eastern summit of the Twins. When I was last here the track had been obvious. Any sign of the route was now hidden by the fire damage, so we zigzagged our way carefully up the hillside; fortunately there was no scrub to bar our

progress. We topped out on to the open summit ridge where we had sweeping views in almost every direction. At the highest point of the Twins, a little further west, we were glad to sit down for a few moments as our legs were not yet accustomed to the steep climbing. Another walking party was here preparing to continue on their journey towards Mt Murray and beyond to the Wongungarra River and Blue Rag Range. They soon departed; we enjoyed the scene a little longer before following them down the southern side of the mountain. We passed the group in a prominent saddle and rejoined the Twins road briefly before heading on to the crest of the Barry Mountains and continuing on a walking track. We had lunch in a shady saddle with a beautiful grove of snow gums—one of the few pockets of forest that had somehow survived the recent bushfires.

Walkers descending the steep southern slope of the Twins. Twins road snakes into the distance through the burnt bush with the snowcapped Mt Howitt on the horizon.
All photos Glenn van der Knijff





Heading west, we traversed a scenic ridge and climbed to a high point with good views towards Mt Murray, now deceptively close. We continued through the deathly-white remains of a once grand forest that was amazingly stark, yet beautiful at the same time. Our minds wandering, we erred and followed the ridge as it swung around to the south, away from the main divide. Realising our mistake, we backtracked a few hundred metres and were lucky to find the main route where it descended a broad spur to the south-west. We joined the Twins road again lower down the ridge and followed it for a short distance to a saddle below Mt Murray. The saddle had been burnt but the forest of white trunks and lush grass still looked like a pleasant camp-site and we dropped our rucksacks without hesitation.

◀ We continued through the deathly-white remains of a once grand forest that was amazingly stark, yet beautiful at the same time. ▶

Tony and I set off to find water in the gully to the south and soon stumbled upon a faint track. We passed a cow's carcass—not much more than a bleached skeleton—hidden in the light undergrowth. We saw the skeletal remains of another cow, and then another. We descended past the ruins of Murray Hut and reached the gully proper. The remains of more cattle were lying in or near the dry creek-bed; it was quite unnerving and more than a little eerie. The cattle may have fled to the relative safety of the moist gully in a vain attempt to escape the bushfires.

About ten minutes below the Murray Hut site a spring bubbled out of the ground and, despite our grizzly discoveries, we were confident that the water would be clean and refreshing. It was. By the time we'd returned with the precious water, an hour after arriving at the saddle, Stephen had set up camp and the Mt Murray walkers had arrived. We prepared for a lazy evening.

The other party was up early in the morning and left camp an hour before we did. We relaxed over breakfast, then headed a short distance south-west on the Twins road to a junction with Mt Murray Track. Our route ahead was obvious; all eyes were drawn to the main spine of the Great Divide rising and falling over a series of hills to the dominant summit of Mt Selwyn, about 13 kilometres to the west and our next major destination. We left the Twins road and descended steadily on Mt Murray Track. We came round a spur and had a good view of Mt Murray through the trees; we

were even able to see the other walkers as they crossed the mountain's bald summit.

Our path led us along the Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT), which in this region mainly follows fire tracks along the crest of the divide. After a few big hills we descended into a prominent saddle where Selwyn Creek road crosses the range. We rested here while I attended to a couple of large blisters. A vehicle drove up to the saddle, its occupants stopping for a chat and to offer us water. Moments later a police vehicle passed—another offer of water but we thought we had plenty and declined on both occasions.

We climbed the next steep hill and the sun really began to bite. The warm weather and tough ascents made us

The tall alpine-ash forest on Selwyn South was lightly singed but the foliage had regrown and with little scrub the bush setting was delightful. Granite boulders dotted the upper part of the mountain, creating a park-like setting not dissimilar to parts of the Mt Buffalo plateau.



Stephen Hamilton descending through an 'enchanted forest' of burnt trees near the Murray Hut site.

sweat profusely and our water resources were rapidly depleted. It was only when we reached the saddle east of Mt Selwyn that we realised that we were not carrying enough water. We should have accepted water at Selwyn Creek road as we were now feeling drained.

The ridge up to Mt Selwyn was lovely despite being severely burnt. After grappling with the combined effects of dehydration and exertion I met Stephen on the summit, where three motorcycle riders joined us. Tony arrived and we ate lunch, sipped at our remaining water, and savoured the grandstand views from the open summit area. At 1410 metres, Mt Selwyn was the last major viewing point for two days. We were able to identify many prominent peaks: the imposing lines of Mt Cobbler to the west; and to the north-east the fire-ravaged Barry Mountains snaking their way to the peaks of Mts Hotham, Feathertop and Bogong on the horizon. However, our attention was drawn to the south-west where we could see the rocky summits of the Viking and the Razor looming in the forest about 20 kilometres distant.

After a good rest we proceeded towards Selwyn South, following the faint track from the saddle south of Mt Selwyn. This saddle marked an important boundary; it seemed to be the western edge of the 2003 bushfire. From here we were heading through mostly unburnt forest—a pleasant respite after almost two days of walking in sunshine.

The route levelled out as we reached a fire track one kilometre west of Selwyn South. Our map and notes indicated reliable water close by and we decided to stay put for the night. We pitched the tent and Stephen and I



went to collect water down Canyon Road. Within ten minutes we reached a small creek; we washed two days of sweat from our bodies and returned to camp an hour later.

That night there was a strong wind and I felt sure that our tarp would have disappeared into the Wonnangatta Valley by dawn.

Surprised to see it still intact at 6.30 am, I got up and saw that there had been a change in the weather. Heavy clouds were blowing in and rain seemed inevitable. We ate quickly and were off by 8.30 am, hoping to reach our next camp-site at Barry Saddle before the weather set in.

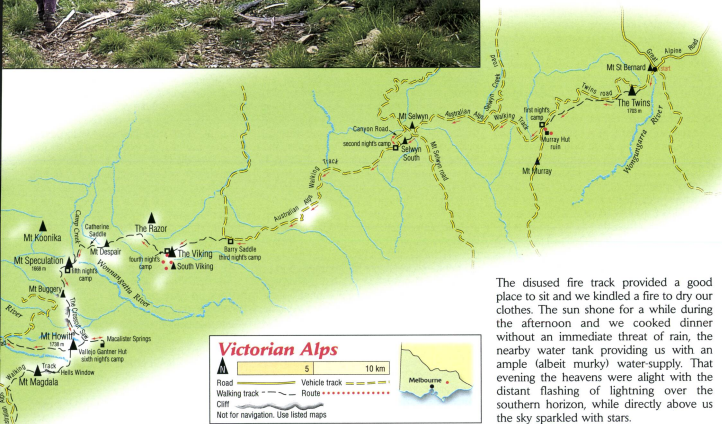


From camp the AAWT followed Selwyn Track. We made good progress along the undulating ridge, the cool breeze making conditions excellent for walking. Shortly after passing the West Humffray Road intersection we met three walkers heading towards Mt St Bernard. They had come from the Viking a few days earlier, but had had difficulty in getting off the mountain. Floundering in thick scrub on the eastern fall of the Viking, it had taken them six hours to cover the four and a half kilometres from the summit to Barry Saddle. Tomorrow we'd be climbing the Viking; I had visions of us thrashing about in the scrub on the ascent, or being marooned on a cliff, so I strolled on to clear my head.

We soon joined East Riley Road and followed it for about one kilometre round the side of a hill, then climbed back on to the ridge. Climbing this more overgrown part of Selwyn Track we found that a water tank had been established on top of a hill. The water tasted good; this vicinity would make a pleasant camp-site on a future walk.

The track dropped steeply, and then climbed a knoll. A brief but heavy shower passed over us unexpectedly and by the time we reached Van Dammes Track it was apparent that more rain would follow. I phoned my wife who described a bleak weather forecast; storms with heavy showers today, with rain developing tomorrow. A few spots of rain marred our short lunch break and we couldn't get to Barry Saddle fast enough.

An intense shower drenched us just as we strode into the saddle. We hastily unpacked the tent, set up camp and had just stowed our gear under cover when the rain ceased!



The disused fire track provided a good place to sit and we kindled a fire to dry our clothes. The sun shone for a while during the afternoon and we cooked dinner without an immediate threat of rain, the nearby water tank providing us with an ample (albeit murky) water-supply. That evening the heavens were alight with the distant flashing of lightning over the southern horizon, while directly above us the sky sparkled with stars.

I awoke to the crash of thunder and spattering of rain half an hour after going to bed. This seemed odd considering how clear the sky had been but I figured that it was unlikely to rain all night. Indeed, by morning the sun was breaking through the clouds, promising a fine start to the day.

By 9 am we'd packed up and were ready to tackle the Viking. Past Barry Saddle was a wilderness zone, an area devoid of prominent tracks, route markers and signposts. The route climbed a faint foot-pad through bracken and light scrub to the top of a ridge and continued for a few kilometres to a saddle below the steep eastern end of the mountain. The temperature remained perfect for walking and we climbed the steepening slope with verve. The thin scrub gave way to open, rocky ground part way up, the route veering left into a gully to avoid some of the larger rocky bluffs. Heading right again, an escarpment to our north-west offered views of the Razor. The grade was very steep; it wasn't too difficult but I was glad to be ascending rather than descending, particularly over some of more complicated outcrops. If travelling in the opposite direction it would require constant vigilance to stay with the faint track, and it would be easy to end up in the thick scrub to the east of the main route—this is probably what had happened to the party we met the previous day.

The route flattened abruptly at the prominent north-east end of the summit ridge, among the snow gums and alpine ash. It didn't appear to be far to the top but the rocky slabs along the ridgeline looked impossible to follow; so too did the faint track which headed south-west below the ridge crest where the scrub abutted the rock slabs. We soon lost the track and instead picked the best line we could in the general direction of the summit. Yellow track markers appeared on trees here and there—leftovers from the days when the route was named the Alpine Walking Track—and helped to guide us in the right direction. The rock slabs petered out somewhat an hour later and we found the route again and followed it to the ridge-top. We soon reached a small, grassy plateau a few hundred metres north-east of the summit, surprised that it had only taken us a little more than three hours from Barry Saddle. Dark, forlorn clouds were moving in fast so we set about establishing our camp in this most spectacular camp-site. Rocky outcrops provided a fine viewing point on one side of us, and there was classic snow-gum forest on the other—it was idyllic.

We had just set up the tent and tarp when the first rain squall hit. Stephen relaxed in the tent while Tony and I pattered around outside, adjusting the tarp so that we could collect any rain that fell on our billys, eliminating the need to find flowing water. The first shower was short but heavy and we collected about half a litre of water. With more storms brewing we felt sure that we'd be able to collect an ample supply.

Tony and I sat above the cliffs of the Viking and watched storm fronts approach—streams of cloud were whipping up over the face of the Razor a few kilometres to our

north-west. It was exhilarating. Frequent showers approached but mostly broke up over the Viking and split to the north and south of our camp-site. On the few occasions when it did rain, the blustery winds caused the tarp to flap so violently that all the water was blown off! By 4 pm we'd only collected a few more cups of water—certainly not enough for dinner and drinking-water for the following day—so Stephen and I decided to head down a gully to find water.

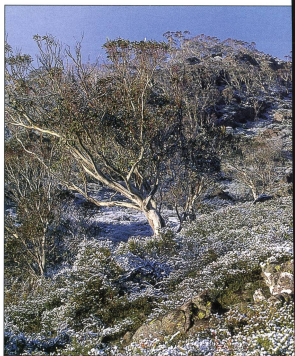
We sauntered over the Viking's summit, down to a saddle near South Viking and south-west down a gully. I had been down the gully ten years earlier and I was confident that as it was early spring we'd find water not far below the ridgeline. The gully seemed promising at first, but after descending for 100 vertical metres we still hadn't found flowing water. We were frustrated but committed and continued to descend until we reached the spring by a cove of tea-tree well down the hillside. Supplies replenished, we headed back to camp. As luck would have it, when we were only 15 minutes from camp it began to rain heavily—we were drenched to the skin by the time we reached the tent. If we had waited, we could have collected all the water we needed from our tarp, saving us the one and three-quarter hours it took to make the return trip to the spring. The rain passed and we ate dinner by the fire as a calm chill settled over the mountain.

I looked out of the vestibule as the morning sun appeared and was amazed to see that it had snowed lightly overnight. I got out of the tent and tried to rouse the others but they needed more than a little convincing! The snowy scene was extremely beautiful, the dark cliffs of the Viking contrasting with the snow-dappled trees around the camp-site. As we prepared breakfast the air was cold and there were occasional snow flurries—it was a magical place to be. The snow was thawing fast and by the time we left camp it had all melted.

Our route led over the summit of the Viking and down the summit ridge before plummeting through a gully between the cliffs. The grade eased as we descended and we walked into a sunny Viking Saddle. Further west the track led along a thickly forested ridge and climbed on to the conglomerate rock slabs of the southern end of the Razor. The sun was out but the air was frigid; we paused only long enough to eat some scroggin before following the vague path towards Mt Despair. Many years earlier I hadn't had any trouble along this section; this time we lost the track within 500 metres of leaving the Razor and found ourselves searching high and low for the correct route. The track notes warned us not to stray too far below the rock slabs so we headed higher than we thought necessary and promptly

found the faint track, hidden among a chaotic jumble of boulders and head-high scrub. Although it was obscure in places, once on the track we had little problem following it to the northern end of Mt Despair where a good lookout to the right of the track provided an impressive view of the Razor's sharp summit ridge and plunging cliffs.

We crossed the tree-covered Mt Despair and staggered into Catherine Saddle in



Tony Maasakkers enjoying the early morning sun on the Viking.

desperate need of lunch. We'd only covered eight kilometres since breakfast but the walking hadn't been entirely easy and it was 2.30 pm by the time we stopped. The cool breeze forced us to move on and we were soon sidling Mt Speculation's north-east ramparts along an old road.

A cairn on the road marked the point where the AAWT climbed away to the south. Craning my head upwards I could see just how steep the track was. I struggled up the initial section but soon established a rhythm and I found myself climbing at a good pace. The track flattened as we reached a prominent spur and I could see Mt Speculation through the trees. The last kilometre of the day was the most painful, with prickly scrub tearing at our legs as we walked.

We reached the grassy flats at the head of Camp Creek and searched for a camp-site that would provide a good morning view. We chose one with an outlook over the upper Wonngatta Valley and the Crosscut Saw.

We settled back, watching the evening light spread over the mountains while dinner cooked when a lone walker appeared. She'd just bagged the Crosscut Saw and was heading beyond the Razor and the Viking over the next few days, eventually circuiting back

to Mt Howitt. Considering the navigational problems and rough walking she was certain to encounter, we agreed that it was a brave effort.

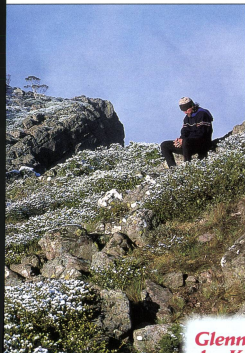
At 6.15 am there was a brilliant sunrise, the eastern slopes of Mt Speculation aglow in a warm, orange light. I faded with the colours and slept for another hour. By the time we left camp a high cloud had formed a veil above us. We had heard that the fore-

waited until 10 am, hoping the storm might ease. It didn't; we set off towards Mt Howitt in driving rain. At the Mt Howitt plateau we were greeted by gale-force winds that nearly whipped our legs from beneath us. We marched on, heads down. Stephen and Tony paused at the summit but I motioned with my head towards Howitt Spur as I had no desire to stop. Conditions were horrendous; it was a relief to drop down Howitt Spur and enter the forest, avoiding the worst of the gale.

Halfway down the spur the rain eased and the fog lifted sufficiently to give us some encouragement. We could even see Hells Window and the cliff-face of Mt Magdala to our left. By the time we reached

out of the rain. We arrived just in time; the rain came in heavier bursts during the afternoon and continued on and off until the following morning.

Our penultimate day arrived and we had only four kilometres to cover. We had arranged to meet friends at Ritchies Hut but due to the bleak weather it was hard to find the impetus to leave. We followed an old bridle path that sidled above the southern bank of the Howqua River beyond Pikes Flat; it was in good condition and led us to Ritchies Hut in no time at all. We unloaded our gear in the hut at noon and an hour later we'd washed, changed into fresh clothes and were thawing out by the fire, ready for our guests to arrive.



Glenn van der Knijff

grew up in the Victorian Alps where he developed an insatiable interest in mountain recreation, particularly cross-country skiing and bushwalking. He's skied in Canada, the USA and Europe, trekked in Nepal, lazed on the beaches of Thailand and the Cook Islands, and travelled extensively throughout Europe. But his real passion is still for the High Country of Victoria.

cast was for rain later in the day so we decided to push to Vallejo Gantner Hut at Macalister Springs for the night.

We made good time climbing over Mt Buggery and reached the Crosscut Saw by midday. Two walkers were having lunch in the lee of one of the Crosscut Saw's knolls and they informed us that two deer hunters were staying in the hut, both armed with rifles. We pushed on apprehensively.

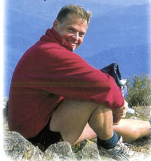
When we arrived at the hut the hunters had gone out. We contemplated pitching the tent but it seemed to be getting colder and rain looked imminent. Small hail began to fall, then the rain set in.

The hunters arrived later in the day. They'd spent the better part of the day stalking deer, but the only shooting was of the video footage variety. We were fortunate to be in the shelter of the hut while the storm raged outside—if not for the leaking roof we would have had a perfect night's sleep.

I had dreams of crossing Mt Howitt in the sun but these were dashed when the incessant rain had not let up by morning. The hunters returned to Howitt road but we



A pleasant camp-site in a 'forest of white trunks and lush grass' in the saddle near the Murray Hut site.



the overgrown remains of Upper Howqua road in the depths of the Howqua River valley the showers were sporadic.

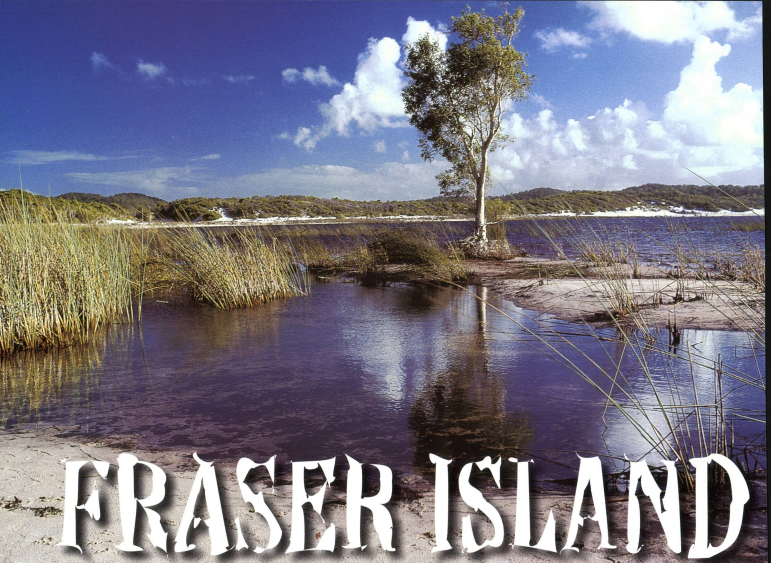
We reached Bindaree Hut, on the banks of the Howqua River, in time for a late lunch and set up camp on the grass nearby. We collected firewood, but a downpour drove us into the small, dark hut. A blue weeb had made its home inside and it was obviously distressed by our company. The weather seemed to be improving so we decided to make a dash for Pikes Flat, five kilometres downstream. We repacked our gear, strolled along the four-wheel-drive track and arrived at Pikes Flat around an hour later, just as the heavens opened again. We crossed the Howqua River and reached a refuge—not a hut, but a shelter without any walls. It wasn't perfect but at least we were

A group of walkers from a club arrived first, and then four fishermen joined us. Finally Zoë and Kate turned up, wet and bedraggled but carrying loads of fresh food. The hamburgers they cooked for dinner were a real treat and we couldn't wait until morning to see what they'd brought for breakfast!

We finished our trek with an amble downstream along the bridle track to Eight Mile Flat. Despite being physically tired, I felt mentally refreshed and revitalised and couldn't wait to reacquaint myself with this spectacular part of the Victorian Alps. I was glad to be heading home but a part of me just wanted to turn around, head back to the hills and continue walking.

Maps

You'll need the Vicmap Dargo Plains—Cobungura and Howitt—Selwyn 1:50 000 sheets, as well as the 1:25 000 Buller South map.



FRASER ISLAND

A GREAT WALK

John and Lyn Daly explore the lakes and bush along the newly opened track

WE HAD JUST SCRAMBLED UP THE Springbrook Pinnacle in the Gold Coast hinterland with our niece Belinda when she said: 'This is a great walk but I'd really love to do a through walk soon. Will you take me up Mt Barney?'

A bit hesitant to take a first-timer up Mt Barney, we suggested the five-day walk on Fraser Island which had just been opened. Belinda thought it had a certain romantic appeal so we all agreed to 'head off to Fraser!'

As tends to happen when we're planning a walk, others soon came on board. A few days later Ros Firster said, 'My friend Richard has never done an overnight walk either, perhaps we should join you'. Derek Matheue learned of our plans and decided that he'd like to come too. In a matter of a few days, everything was planned.

We were keen to avoid the noisy weekend crowds so arrived at Fraser Island on a Monday afternoon. As we drove off the barge at Inskip Point we spotted a lone dingo skulking through the trees. Because of the island's

isolation, its dingoes are the purest strain in Australia. It is unfortunate that many of them have become used to humans due to visitors coaxing them into camps and feeding them. This has led to the death of one young boy. Many dingoes have had to be killed after becoming unafraid of human activity.

The Fraser Island 'Great Walk' begins at Dilli Village (which is not really a village at all) where we planned to camp for the first night. We'd complete the car shuttle in the morning at low tide, and then begin the walk. However, we'd been misinformed; we weren't allowed to camp at Dilli Village so we drove several kilometres along a rutted, sandy road to camp at Lake Boomanjin.

We set up our camp inside a huge dingo-proof compound that had been erected to protect the dingoes from hamburger-wielding visitors. Belinda pitched her tent on her own for the first time and laid claim to being an 'independent woman!' After much

Above, the 'crystal-clear waters of Lake Birrabeen'. Below, an expectant dingo awaits scraps. Both photos John Chapman. Right, Ros Firster and Richard Lukacz, dressed for different seasons, on the well-defined track to Lake Garawongera.

All uncredited photos John Daly



excited discussion about pack weights, walking boots and, of course, food, we climbed into our tents under a beautiful, starry sky.

During the early hours of the morning, a mopoke screeched and the dingoes howled an accompaniment. At dawn the kookaburras started their raucous laughing and a murder of crows chimed in. That was our cue to stroll to the water's edge to witness

a beautiful, orange sunrise before heading back to Dilli Village to begin the first leg of the walk.

We paused for the obligatory group photo before heading across a boardwalk that spanned a swampy section of coastal wetlands. With only a light day pack it was easy to walk over the first sandy ridge. It was lined with banksias and scribbly gums and

a carpet of casuarina needles made the sandy track firm underfoot. We soon spotted Lake Boomanjin through the trees.

It wasn't far to the sidetrack to the Wongi Sandblow and we all scarpaced up the steep, white dune on fresh legs. After much oohing and ahing, we left our gritty vantage point and continued on an undulating track to our camp-site near the lake. We packed up leisurely and waited for the tide to ebb before Richard and I drove to Happy Valley to complete the car shuttle. We were almost ready to shoulder our packs and head north from Lake Boomanjin when Richard produced several small packets of chilli-flavoured strips of beef. With his inimitable Polish accent, he said, 'I made this for all of you last week and you will really enjoy it'. Or at least that's what I think he said!

We finally left the camp-site, cars in place, around 2 pm and followed the shore of Lake Boomanjin northwards, crossing a few shallow rills of tannin-stained water. We were peppered by windswept sand as we walked beside the lake but Belinda and Richard were taking it all in their stride. The forest at the end of the lake provided a welcome break from the sudden squalls and we fol-

“ We headed off to our tents as the temperature fell, again to the accompaniment of howling dingoes. ”

lowed an easy, undulating track to the walkers' camp-site beside Lake Benaroo. It is not enclosed, but as applies to every site is equipped with a low pack table and a metal 'dingo box'.

We met a young Kiwi guy who was doing the walk in the opposite direction. After dinner we all ambled down to the edge of the lake and sat chatting for hours below a clear, starry sky, spotting orbiting satellites and the occasional shooting star. We headed off to our tents as the temperature fell, again to the accompaniment of howling dingoes.

The next day we followed a soft but level, sandy track round the shore of the lake towards the forest canopy. We paused for a while beside the crystal-clear waters of Lake Birrabeen before setting out towards Central Station. As we followed a track through undulating terrain the banksia woodland gave way to forest dominated by blackbutt. After strolling beside an avenue of tall kauri pines, we reached the huge, fenced walkers' camp for lunch. Elevated mesh lockers have been supplied for food storage even inside the dingo fence as not only the dingoes like



The Pile Valley track led us to the top of a sandy ridge from where we could look down on a canopy of piccabeen palms scat-

When we returned to our camp-site, we discovered that the showers were coin operated but Belinda was the only person

Another four kilometres of easy walking brought us to the fenced walkers' camp near



Derek Matheve and Belinda Beer beside the beautiful Lake McKenzie, one of Fraser Island's most famous lakes.

with a one-dollar coin! After a light-hearted discussion about who should shower with whom, Derek headed back to the day-use area to try to find a tourist with change. He returned successful and we all managed to clean up. This was becoming a very civilised five-day walk! And we were happy that our reconstituted chicken dinner was almost palatable as well.

On the third day we rose with the sun and spent a long time wandering around the old buildings of Central Station, admiring the massive stag-horns attached to trunks of tall pines. Kauri pines and hoop pines were planted here in the 1920s after most of the original softwood had been felled to provide timber for a growing mainland colony.

We had another opportunity to enjoy the se-

Lake McKenzie. This is probably one of the most beautiful and popular lakes on the island. We ignored the hordes of visitors as they piled out of tourist buses, and found a sandy spot to drop our packs while we had a swim. Many of the tourists looked at us as though we had two heads; I heard one woman say to a friend, 'Why would they carry all that stuff on their backs when you can easily reach this spot on a bus?' Some people will just never understand!

From La McKenzie, we slogged uphill following a short section of rutted, sandy road before swinging away from the road again on a hard-packed walking track covered with leaf litter. As they led our group at a brisk pace towards a cool section of blackbutt forest, Derek was trying to convince Belinda that she would enjoy regaining. We then followed the route of an old logging tramway through alternating sections of tall, closed eucalypt forest and rainforest.

By the time we reached the Lake Wabby camp-site we were all feeling a bit weary. After stashing our gear in the dingo boxes, we followed a foot-pad round the side of a ridge to a car park near a lookout platform.



The view from here stretched across Lake Wabby, the deepest of all Fraser Island's lakes, to the Hamerstone Sandblow.

With Richard urging us on, we all agreed to head down 1500 metres through scribbly-gum forest to the edge of the lake and explore the sandblow. We met a group of British backpackers here who had walked to the lake from the ocean beach. A young Irish guy pulled his digital camera out to show us the photos he had snapped of a shark from the beach, saying, 'I think it's called a spade head'. He was given an impromptu lesson (Aussie style) in identifying shovel-nose sharks before they headed off to the beach, leaving our group alone on the edge of the lake. Derek decided to go for a swim while the rest of us sat on the dune spotting turtles

where the trees appeared much taller. The closed forest canopy also made it very cool. The occasional old stump of a felled tree reminded us of how often trees are valued more for their commercial than their aesthetic value. Lilly-pilly berries littered the ground in several areas and we could hear the heavy wing-beats of wompoo pigeons as they fed in the canopy.

A track led to the tallest satiny on the island but we ignored the seven kilometre round trip and continued straight ahead. Soon after that we began to descend very gradually to another junction. As it was only 400 metres to the Valley of the Giants camp-site we headed into camp and set up the tents before returning to the junction for a 1300 metre side-trip to the tallest

and I jumped out of the tent to face another day.

We set off early, following another section of old tramway through beautiful rainforest. Hard-packed sand made the walking easy as we headed towards an area where spindly eucalypt regrowth flanked the track. The vegetation changed to banksia woodland as we headed towards a junction where a sign pointed left to Petries Camp. We all wanted to make the day last as long as possible so we dropped our packs and went in search of ruins. There is nothing left of this old logging camp but the side-trip did take another thirty minutes.

From the junction, we continued along the old tramlines route through more forest giants towering above picabeen palms. After cresting a high, sandy ridge, we followed a new section of walking track through open forest to the edge of Lake Garawongera, one of the island's most beautiful perched lakes. Perched lakes occur when water collects in a dune hollow and is retained by an underlying hardpan. Fraser Island contains more than half the world's perched lakes! There is another walkers' camp at this site, complete with pack tables and dingo boxes, and it is a very peaceful place for lunch. Visitors are requested not to take food into the fragile environment along the edge of the lake. Whilst having lunch, Belinda discovered a tick on her arm but managed to flick it off before it made a meal of her.

After lunch we climbed uphill beside the lake, then entered another stand of rainforest where we again heard wompoo pigeons feeding in the canopy. The track then began a long gradual descent, passing a tree with a surveyor's blaze in its trunk. We headed through a gap between two long dunes, climbed the next ridge, then headed downhill. We could hear the sound of the surf long before we reached a picnic area that marked the end of our five-day walk. We followed a rutted, sandy road for a few hundred metres to emerge at the pub at

Happy Valley. After an animated discussion that lasted all of ten seconds, we agreed to stop in for a drink.

Belinda decided she was well and truly 'over tuna' so ordered a hamburger with the works. Lyn and I invited Belinda and Richard to share their thoughts on overnight walking and they both agreed that it was the best thing they had done for a long time. Richard even introduced us to a new Polish word—*naz-drowie*—which in other languages is *shol*, *prost*, *salud*, and *chin-chin*. Definitely seems to have a bit more class than 'bottoms up, mate!' Perhaps that's why it's called Happy Valley. ☺



Belinda gives herself a push up the steep Badjala Sandblow.

and fish. We headed back to our camp-site with the light fading.

Derek called us early the next morning so we could watch the sunrise from the lookout before breakfast and the start of another day's walk. It was a cool 6°C as we fell into step along another disused, sandy road. Belinda had settled into her stride; she and Derek scarpere ahead to lead us through an attractive stand of tall, dense forest. After a few hours of delightful walking, we reached a track junction. We dropped our packs and headed east for 600 metres to a broad, sandy swathe leading to the edge of Badjala Sandblow. Soft sand sucked at our legs as we struggled uphill to its crest, where we had extensive views across the coastal forests to the ocean.

From the sandblow the track gradually headed downhill northwards to an area

tallow-wood on the island. Believed to be over 1000 years old, this huge tree has a circumference of 11.5 metres and a diameter of 3.6 metres. We paused to reflect on the daunting prospect of a future without tall trees before heading back to camp.

It was a chilly 4°C at sunrise and Richard's morning routine of callisthenics now also included Ros. The huffing and puffing didn't detract from the birdsong of magpies and butcher birds as Lyn

John and Lyn Daly

have written six bushwalking guidebooks. They have turned their passion for nature conservation, bushwalking and travel into an occupation that allows them to spend months at a time working (walking) in the bush.



Wilderness PATTERNS

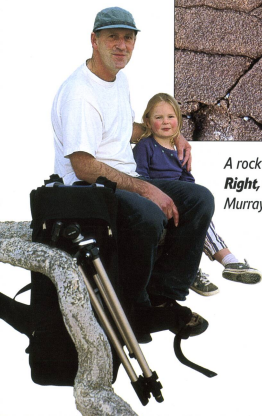
The beauty in nature's abstract arrangements, by *Paul Sinclair*



*Peeling bark leaves a patchwork surface on a spotted gum,
Murramurrang National Park, New South Wales south coast.*



*Beach pebbles glisten and gleam with colour
in Murrumbidgee National Park.*



A rock holds an army of inhabitants at Ben Boyd National Park, NSW.
Right, water-weed forms abstract patterns down to the water at
Murray Lagoon, Cape Gantheaume Conservation Park, South Australia.

Paul Sinclair is a teacher and photographer. In the outdoors he alternates between searching for interesting landscapes and light, and devising ways of enticing his six-year-old daughter Ruby to walk for another 100 metres.



Wilderness PHOTOGRAPHY

Graham Wootton traces its path



Left, the crowd at the Hobart Town Hall for one of the 'Save Lake Pedder' slide shows in the early 1970s. Below, the Kodak folding roll-film camera was an affordable and popular camera for bushwalkers in the 1930s and 1940s. All photos by the author

THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A SPECIAL SYMBIOSIS between the rucksack sports and photography. Photography probably provides the most effective way of capturing the grandeur and spirit of the many wild places that bushwalkers visit on their walks. It produces a permanent, versatile record that is useful for one's own personal memories, as something tangible to show to friends and family, and as a potent tool in the fight to preserve wild places. Conversely, for the keen photographer bushwalking can open up a new world, giving access to subjects and locations that would otherwise be beyond reach.

Bushwalking as we know it had its roots in the early 20th century but the spirit of bushwalking photography goes back considerably further. For example, the Du Faur expedition of 1875 explored the upper Grose River Gorge in the Blue Mountains, recording its beauty on film and canvas. The mission of this expedition was in tune with that of contemporary wilderness photographers—to record the beauty and grandeur of the Australian wilderness for all to appreciate and, it was hoped, encourage them to value and protect the area. William Pigeonit apparently achieved much more with the easel on this expedition than the photographers Bischoff and Lindt did with their cameras; however,

given the rough nature of the terrain and the heavy and cumbersome nature of their cameras, this is not surprising. Another, more successful example is Nicholas Caire's remarkable large-format photography of Victorian bush and mountain scenes from the late 19th century. These photographs compare favourably with modern wilderness photography and provide a fascinating insight into the involvement with and appreciation of the 'bush' at that time.

The early days

Before the Second World War, the 35 millimetre cameras that we take for granted today were beyond the reach of all but the most affluent bushwalkers. The early bushwalking days were recorded almost entirely with folding roll-film cameras using black-and-white film, all that was available. However, the relatively large film size provided good-quality results and these early photographs still hold a special attraction and interest.

Black-and-white photography is largely the domain of the dedicated amateur photographer today. Despite the lessening of public interest, good black-and-white enlargements still have a unique appeal and can be very impressive. The advent of digital photographic techniques allows colour images to be con-



verted to black and white at the click of a button and it seems likely that there will be a resurgence of interest in the medium.

The advent of colour slides and the slide show

Kodachrome colour transparency (slide) film was invented by Leopold Mannes and Leo Godowsky in 1935, closely followed by the introduction of Agfacolor in 1936. However,

the colour slide did not become a popular medium for bushwalking photographers until the early 1950s. This trend accelerated into the 1960s as cameras became more capable and more affordable, and improved films were introduced. Kodachrome II, introduced in 1964, was an astonishingly sharp film with realistic, fade-resistant colours—qualities that the best films of today have barely surpassed.

By the mid-1960s the post-trip slide show had become a regular and very popular event in most bushwalking clubs. Indeed, it was sometimes joked that 50 per cent of the fun of bushwalking was planning the trip and the pretrip anticipation, 50 per cent was looking at the slides afterwards and the rest was all hard work! Places like Southwest Tasmania were still largely unexplored wilderness in those days and anyone who returned with a good collection of slides could be guaranteed a large and enthusiastic audience.

Slide presentations were not just at club level. As far back as 1952 Olegas Truchanas had been taking slides of his trips and showing them to wide audiences at schools and local community halls. Tasmanian pioneer aviator Lloyd Jones was also a very competent photographer and his collection of aerial photographs of the Tasmanian wilderness in the 1950s is unique.

The 'Save Lake Pedder' campaign reignited in the late 1960s and photography became a very potent tool in the debate. Truchanas again came to the fore with his two magnificent audiovisuals 'Pedder' and 'Winter'. He presented them at the Hobart Town Hall where his photography and showmanship were so compelling that there was standing-room only in the 500-seat Town Hall on eight consecutive occasions and many hundreds were turned away. Truchanas's audiovisuals would not have been as successful without the help of Hobart electronics engineer Ralph Hope-Johnstone. Commercially available lap-dissolve (fade in-fade out) equipment was either very primitive or non-existent; Hope-Johnstone designed and fabricated electronically controlled diaphragm faders that fitted in front of the lenses of two high-quality Leica Pradovit projectors. The faders could be controlled manually and the rate and level of fade-in and -out could be varied: few modern audiovisual set-ups can match this. The presenter rehearsed the show using the manual faders, recording the fading sequence on two tracks of a four-track, reel-to-reel tape recorder for subsequent automatic play-back. The other two tracks were used for the stereo musical accompaniment.

Although the Lake Pedder battle was lost, the impetus it gave to the conservation move-

ment was enormous and contributed significantly to future conservation victories, such as the Franklin River campaign. Truchanas tragically drowned in the Gordon River in 1972 but the attraction of the Hobart Town Hall slide shows continued and others carried on his work. Peter Dombrovskis—now mainly remembered for his large-format work—produced several outstanding audiovisuals including 'Mt Wellington—The Mountain', which I believe is one of the finest audiovisual presentations ever produced. Dombrovskis was a perfectionist; he chose his slides with infinite care and beautifully matched the fade transitions from one slide to the next. It is amazing to think that this audiovisual was photographed entirely using a humble Pentax S1a camera with only an East German Zeiss Tessar standard lens and a budget-price, short telephoto lens.

The major walking clubs in Tasmania also took their slide shows to wider

Left, An early Rolleicord twin-lens camera, owned by Tasmanian bushwalking pioneer Jack Thwaites. Below, in the 1930s it was a bushwalkers' dream to have a Leica II. This one dates from 1932. (The Leitz brand is now called Leica.)

can be blamed on the advent of colour television and video, but a major part can be attributed to the way individual bushwalkers and photographers presented their slides. The use of poor-quality projection equipment, a poor selection of slides, too many slides, inadequate rehearsal and poor presentation skills all contributed to the slide show's loss of popularity. This is a pity as fine slides, well presented, can still blow away

Photography probably provides the most effective way of capturing the grandeur and spirit of the many wild places that bushwalkers visit on their walks.

most other forms of visual media. Here are a few concise tips for running a successful slide show.

The successful slide show

- Buy the best quality projector you can afford, fitted with the highest-quality lens. Leica Pradovit projectors are probably the best available; the better models have been of unsurpassed quality from the late 1960s. These projectors can sometimes be found second-hand.
- Use a matt, white screen held perfectly flat and project only in a *fully darkened* room.
- Never show more than 100 slides in one session.
- Edit your slides *ruthlessly*. Eliminate any incorrectly exposed, unsharp, poorly composed or repetitive slides. Organise the slides in a smooth, flowing sequence, with periodic changes in pace and mood. Avoid abrupt jumps in brightness between consecutive slides.
- Remember that the most important parts of a slide show are the *beginning* and the



audiences. The Hobart Walking Club ran several successful shows in the Hobart Town Hall in the mid-1970s using Hope-Johnstone's equipment. The Launceston Walking Club was a pioneer in the field of public slide and audiovisual presentations, beginning in 1954 and still going. Created around the theme of 'Do you know Tasmania?' their shows attracted audiences of over 1000 people in their 1970s heyday. The shows also went on tour, visiting Ulverstone and Hobart on an annual or biennial basis.

The 'golden age' of the slide show was waning by the late 1970s. Part of the decline

end: keep your most impressive slides for these points.

- *Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse*—go through the whole show beforehand on the projector.
- Prepare a suitable commentary. Perhaps add a musical background.
- Provide comfortable seating (preferably not more than three-four screen-widths from the screen), control the room lights and provide drinks and snacks.

vantages. You can view them or show them to friends any time, anywhere. Additional sets of prints can be ordered at the time of processing so that one person can take photos for a number of others on the trip. The colour print process also has much greater exposure latitude than colour slides, providing the photographer with a better chance of obtaining a satisfactory photo in difficult lighting conditions.

The narrow exposure latitude of the slide films available and the rudimentary on-camera exposure

camera will enhance your bushwalking experiences depends mostly on the intended use of the photographs. The quality of digital cameras has improved so much in recent times that quality is no longer an issue. A five-six megapixel digital camera will produce prints that for all practical purposes are as good as (or sometimes a little better) than those produced from film. However, from the bushwalkers' perspective there are still some definite pros and cons for digital photography.

Digital cameras have the significant advantage of immediacy. You can display your photographs on your computer monitor or television screen straight after a trip—especially good if you've got a large plasma screen! You can convey what the trip was about while the spirit of the trip is still fresh. You can also email them off immediately to friends or family elsewhere.

If you want to show your pictures to a larger audience, digital projection lags considerably behind film. Digital projectors are very ex-



Above, the Rollei 35 was first released in 1966 but is still valued today by bushwalkers for its high quality and small size. **Right**, the Pentax Spotmatic was a favourite of many bushwalkers in the 1960s and 1970s.

The large-format school

Large-format cameras have been used for landscape photography for a long time. In a bushwalking context, Peter Dombrovskis was a pioneer in the field from the late 1970s, particularly with the use of colour film. Many others have followed in his footsteps. These photographers have done much to publicise the Australian bush through their books and calendars and their photography has played vital roles in many conservation battles. Large-format photography is somewhat removed from mainstream bushwalking. The cameras are very expensive to buy and run, are heavy, bulky and very slow to use. These limitations prevent most bushwalkers from using them but the quality they produce is unmatched.

The move to colour prints

Colour slide films, particularly the Kodachromes, were distinctly superior to colour negative films until the 1980s. In the 1980s the introduction of much improved colour negative films, and mini-labs offering fast turn around changed the whole photographic scene, a change that continued in the 1990s. The great majority of bushwalkers (and photographers in general) take colour prints today, with only the dedicated enthusiasts still taking colour slides.

Despite lacking the ultimate impact of good slides, colour prints have certain distinct ad-

meters made life much harder in the 1960s. The fact that so many great photographs were produced by bushwalkers in those days makes you realise just how many fine photographers there were amongst the bushwalking fraternity.

If you do take colour prints of your bushwalking experiences, here are a few tips to maximise the impact of your photos:

- Seek out a superior photo-processing shop and stick with it. Be prepared to pay a little more for quality.
- If your equipment and technique are up to it, order 'Super Size' prints. They are much more impressive than postcard-size prints and can usually be obtained for a small extra charge or by ordering on a particular day of the week.
- Prints are best displayed on large album pages, attached to the pages by suitable acid-free glue or self-adhesive tabs. Don't have anything covering the prints as even the clearest plastic degrades the image quality. Don't mount poor or repetitive photographs and think carefully about the layout within the album page before mounting your photographs.

Digital cameras

Digital cameras are all the rage these days; sales of digital cameras have now outstripped those of film equivalents. Whether a digital

pensive; they are generally bright enough but lack sharpness. Affordable, high-quality digital projection is still a long way off.

The very nature of film forces you to produce a semi-archival record in the form of the negative (or slide) and a print before you can look at your photographs. Many would see this as a negative for film and a positive for digital. However, with film at least you have the photos to keep. With digital images you may look at your pictures on a computer monitor or on a television but may never get around to archiving them to a properly indexed CD, or even printing them out. In five or ten years' time you may have little record left of your bushwalking experiences.

Digital 'point and shoot' cameras are very compact, can be better featured than their film equivalents (particularly for close-up shots) and are becoming cheaper. Conversely, digital single-lens reflex cameras are rather heavy and bulky to take bushwalking and are still quite expensive if the highest quality is desired. They also have some limitations for wide-angle photography.

Video

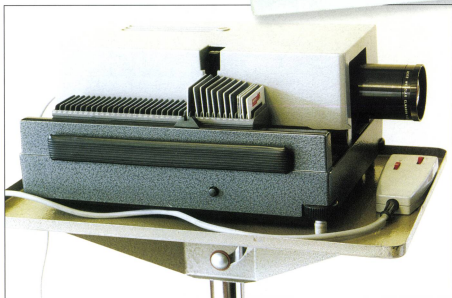
There is no doubt that for some rucksack sports, such as canyoning or cross-country skiing, the added dimensions of movement and sound can really make a difference. Some bushwalkers brought back records of

their Himalayan treks on Super-8 movie film in the 1960s and these films added a degree of reality that still photographs could not match. Amateur movies died out in the late 1970s, largely because of rising film costs. When an electronic replacement came in the form of VHS home video, the quality was rather poor and suitable only for human-interest type subjects. Mini digital-video has turned that around. Very compact, versatile and affordable Mini DV cameras are now available with quality approaching the standard of broadcast television.

Video also requires a whole new set of skills and a greater level of commitment than most people would give to still photography on a bushwalking trip. Video is a bit like a slide show; the result is only as good as the editing and presentation. Very basic rough-and-ready editing can be carried out using a normal VCR but you then also lose part of the quality. If you want to produce professional-quality video that people will enjoy watching you will really need to invest in the computer hardware and software to carry out 'non-linear editing'. This is not difficult to master but requires a level of commitment. Sound is also a problem and it is very difficult for

logical further step if you are seriously interested in writing about and illustrating your trips. Magazines such as *Wild* rely heavily on photographs submitted by contributors; full photographic guidelines are usually available from the publication. However, here are a few general tips to enhance your chances of acceptance.

- Edit your photos thoroughly and do not submit those that are incorrectly exposed, unsharp, poorly composed or repetitive.
- Don't just send in photographs that you personally like, think whether the magazine's target readership would be interested and impressed.



A Leica Pradovit projector of the type used by Olegas Truchanas in his Hobart Town Hall audiovisual presentations. **Top**, modern digital 'point and shoot' cameras are extremely compact.

the amateur to record a good soundtrack while filming. Dubbing in a commentary afterwards is usually the best way to go.

Another consideration is that compared with still photography, video has more limited modes of presentation. The main options are display on your television or using a home-cinema-style digital projector. The latter are very expensive but very effective and are probably the way of the future. You can also make cheap DVDs of your videos to send to friends.

Getting photographs published

While most bushwalking photographs are taken for personal purposes, publication is a

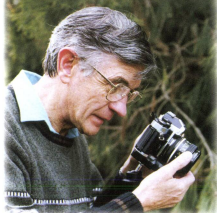
- Follow the submission guidelines carefully. Many editors still prefer submissions to be in the form of colour slides as good slides reproduce very well and are quick and easy to sort through on a light table. Some magazines will now accept colour prints but the prints need to be large-size, high-quality custom prints if they are to be reproduced to a half-page or bigger. Many editors find that they get deluged with so many poor-quality, postcard-size prints that they prefer to avoid the medium altogether. Professional photographers and some professional laboratories can actually make quite high-quality colour

slides from large custom prints. However, these slides still lack the ultimate sharpness of a first-generation slide and are not suitable for full- or double-page spreads.

- If the magazine accepts digital photographs make sure that yours are of the required quality, size and format. Magazines will normally require very high quality (hence very large) digital files. These cannot be sent by email and need to be written to a properly indexed CD. However, no computer-screen image is as quick or useful for evaluating as a good print. If you are submitting digital photos on CD, always enclose a complete, captioned set of prints

Graham Wootton

After growing up in the Blue Mountains of New South Wales, Graham moved to Tasmania in 1971 to work as a structural engineer. His outdoor interests include bushwalking, cross-country skiing, mountain biking and wilderness photography. He runs a commercial photography business in Hobart.



of the photos as well, at least 15 centimetres by 23 centimetres and preferably printed on a photo-quality printer. You may consider this unnecessary in the digital age but remember that the easier you make the editor's job, the better your chances of them appreciating the merit of your work.

Few photographic outcomes are as satisfying as having your photographs published. Apart from the obvious fillip you will get from seeing your work in print, you will also be contributing to the wider appreciation of our wilderness areas and will get paid something in the process. Good luck with your photography!

Snow-camping on

A beginners' skiing trip seemed like such a good idea, by *Gary Tischer*

A SQUEAL. A FALL. A TWISTED KNEE. NINE months earlier on a humid summer's day, a storm brewing and bushfires raging, we had hatched the idea of a skiing and snow-camping trip to Kosciuszko's Main Range. At the time it had seemed a good idea. Now, as I attempted a midwinter food drop with five non-skiers while trying to beat the forecast bad weather, I wondered whether I was out of my depth.

Falling heavily on the steep snow-slope, Cath had twisted her knee badly but hadn't broken anything. The rest of us continued to Twynam Creek, our planned camp-site in a couple of days' time, and buried our food bags in the snow.

As we skied back to the cars it began to drizzle, soon turning to large snowflakes. The front had reached us and looked as though it was going to drop a good amount

of snow. Unfortunately, the snow soon turned to rain. It was August; although it was snowing in Armidale and Orange it was raining in the Snowy Mountains!

Skiing the rest of the week on an injured knee was out of the question so Cath swapped her skis for snowshoes, which provide a good alternative method for back-country travel in the Main Range. Michael also donned snowshoes because of injury.



It doesn't get much better than this! Camp-site amongst the snow gums near Twynam Creek, Kosciuszko National Park. All uncredited photos Gary Tischer

the Main Range

The less than perfect weather didn't deter us from trying to improve our mediocre ski skills on the Nordic ski trails around Perisher. Those in the party who had never seen snow before soon developed an appreciation for how cold it can get in a blizzard accompanied by 70 kilometre winds! These conditions had been hard to imagine in the Queensland summer when we were planning the trip.

The weather was forecast to improve so our party left Jindabyne and headed into the mountains for some serious skiing and



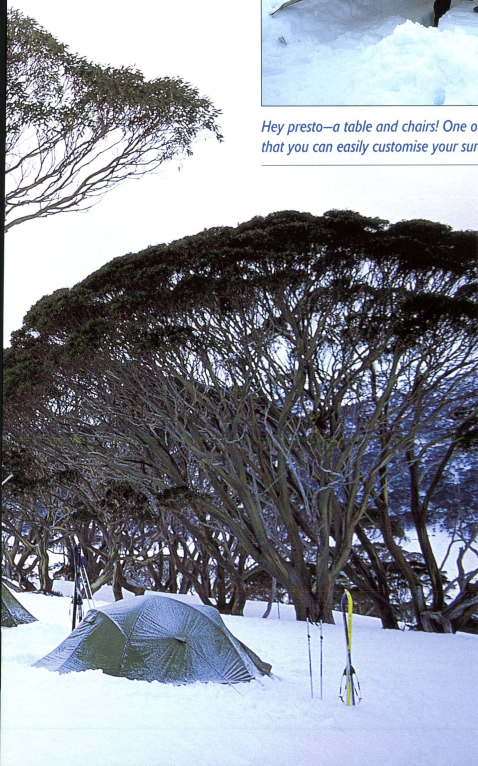
Hey presto—a table and chairs! One of the advantages of snow-camping is that you can easily customise your surroundings.

snow-camping. Tom had joined our group; his company was a relief as we now had two experienced snow-campers in our party of seven. If you have years of experience at an activity it is amazing how much you take for granted; conversely, it is very easy to be unaware of the amount you don't know when doing something new!

Passing on this knowledge can be frustrating and tiring for both parties. This was demonstrated on the first day when I suggested to someone that it would be best if they left their skis on while crossing a snow bridge spanning an icy, fast-flowing creek. His curt reply was, 'Have you ever heard the song *I Did It My Way*?' Not for the first or last time I wondered why I was doing this! Luckily 'Frank' heeded my advice but still managed to get his feet wet.

Learning to cross-country ski should be fun—add a pack weighing more than 20 kilograms and the enjoyment may be reduced! Although a relatively fit, strong party, the first-time skiers found the rigours of cross-country skiing with a full pack arduous. Even Laurie, a fit individual with a number of marathons under his belt, felt the unaccustomed exercise taking its toll. However, when we reached the camp-site and took off our packs and skis the struggle seemed worthwhile.

We found a suitable camp-site behind one of the highest stands of snow gums in the country. There was evidence of previous visitors sheltering here from gale-force winds, reminding us of what a hostile, dangerous place the Main Range can be. That day it seemed so sublime and beautiful.



Classic Kosciuszko Ski Tours

Stephen Curtain tracks some options

The Kosciuszko Main Range has numerous ski-touring opportunities. A gentle introduction for novices is described below, as well as a more challenging option for those who have a few tours under their belt or seek a greater challenge. Both ski tours are on the eastern fall of Kosciuszko's Main Range where large patches of snow gums afford some protection from wintry blasts. However, the tenets of *all* ski trips still apply: be prepared for any kind of weather, dress appropriately, eat and drink plentifully, pack lightly, let someone know before you go and aim not to leave any trace. Ensure that your camp is established by late afternoon, well before icy conditions typically set in. If creeks are not accessible carry extra fuel for melting snow. A snow-shovel is a must. The National Parks fee is payable on the road from Jindabyne. Enjoy!

Porcupine Rocks (two days, easy)

Follow the ski trail that heads south from the main building complex at Perisher Valley and leads uphill past numerous ski lodges. Continue along the trail, well marked with snow-poles, as it begins to follow Rock Creek in a south-west direction towards Mt Wheatley. Although the route has the occasional steep pinch—nothing that can't be handled with a



Kath Hammond takes in the view from near Porcupine Rocks.

Left, a spectacular camp-site on the eastern flank of the Rams Head Range. Both photos Stephen Curtain



decent herring-bone or sidestep—it is an enjoyable, steady ascent through snow-gum woodland. Once you reach the ridgetop near GR 254675 there is a glut of protected camp-sites. Naturally, ensure that you have a 'room with a view'. With a hot chocolate and Tim Tams nearby, you can begin to appreciate the spectacular eastern fall of the Main Range—from the Rams Heads to Mt Twynam. If you can time this trip to coincide with a partial or

full moon, it is sublime to see these moonlit peaks. The night sky, too, is mesmerising. The next day's return trip simply follows the inward journey. For something a little different head north off trail, perhaps just within sight of the snow-poles and Rock Creek itself. Take your time. Although the snow may be less stable, there's a definite buzz in exploring new terrain. Better still, dump your rucksack from time to time to try a Telemark or two.

Porcupine Rocks–Rams Head Range extension (three days, moderate)

If time and your ability permit, continue from Porcupine Rocks over the rarely travelled eastern flank of the Rams Head Range. If you have four days at your disposal, so much the better! From the camp-site, keep to the southernmost edge of the ridge overlooking the Thredbo River valley and ski south-west. If the weather is good, from the cosy saddle at GR 232660 you can see north across the extensive snow plains of Betts and Spencers Creeks—tributaries of that well-known river nearby. Make a mental note of this 'escape route' in case your trip turns sour as it's a quick ski tour north across to the snow-pole-marked road between Charlottes Pass and Perisher Valley. A large knoll at GR 220653 may be better traversed by its northern slope although zigzagging west up through the snow-gum forest can be fun. The saddle on the western side of this knoll has another escape route: if necessary just drop north from the saddle and follow Trapyard Creek



to lower, safer terrain. Otherwise, follow Trappyard Creek uphill in a westerly direction. At 1900 metres the landscape is noticeably more exposed. Keep a wary watch for incoming weather that can hide nearby landmarks. Consider snow-camping in the lee of the spectacular, south-facing rocky bluffs. Construct a good, flat platform and erect a solid snow-wall for protection out of Lego-block-style bricks! This airy perch is wonderful in the morning sunlight—make the most of it with numerous hot cups of tea.

Later in the morning, consider leaving your packs and making a dash to Mt Stilwell, which pips that elusive 2000 metre contour. Otherwise traverse north from camp into the valley of Wrights Creek, or head back towards Trappyard Creek. The valley of either creek will lead you down to a delightful, open expanse at about 1750 metres, roughly GR 212670; Charlottes Pass is nearby to the west. From here, it's a straightforward ski tour east towards a saddle (Perisher Gap) at GR 245688 by way of the Summit Road, then a lovely downhill run all the way back to Perisher Valley. Don't get run over by an over-snow vehicle on the way!

Stephen Curtain produces nature-adventure films and works as an outdoors and environmental educator. His preferred Zen-like existence is Tolmark skiing although he recently did some rock dodging on Russia's active volcanoes. Previously he was an Assistant Editor for *Wild* for three years.

We pitched five tents, one of which was to be a communal cooking tent. It required some major development work so we began to dig a table and seven chairs out of the deep snow—one of the advantages of snow-camping! This cooking tent worked extremely well; we could sit comfortably, prepare sumptuous meals and socialise well

midnight thinking that it must be nearly morning. How disappointing it is when you check the time and realise that there are still seven hours until sunrise and welcome warmth. Even worse is when you realise that your bladder is full and spend the following hours lying in a warm sleeping-bag debating whether you can hold on. Take it from me,



into the night without retiring early due to the cold. The cold was not as much of an issue as everyone had anticipated although one night the temperature dropped to -9°C . We all had numerous layers of polypropylene, fleece and Gore-Tex—scrounging cold-weather gear in the subtropics had been difficult but not impossible.

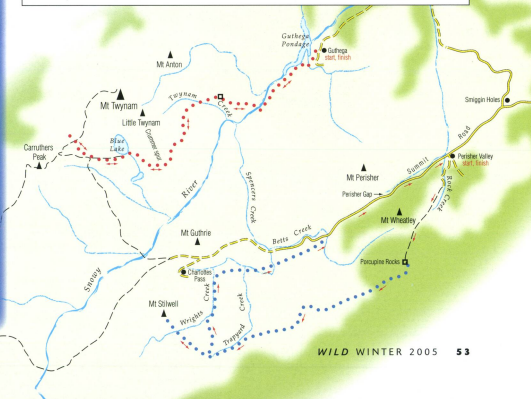
When snow-camping you often go to bed early, exhausted, only to wake up around

Bec Gibbs demonstrating the face plant, an unavoidable part of a beginner's skiing trip.

in the long run it is easier to get up than to lie there thinking about it!

The next day began with the promise of good weather and developed into one of

Kosciuszko Main Range

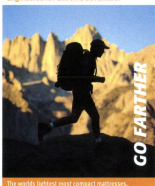


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those perfect Main Range days—calm and clear so that you can see forever and nothing else seems to matter. We were heading for Blue Lake, a place I had visited many times but had never seen in winter.

The plan was to climb to about 1900 metres and contour round to the eastern end of the lake. We had waited for the snow to soften before heading towards Little Twynam; a good idea as climbing on the icy snow was difficult. Michael and Cath set off at a good pace on their snowshoes and were able to head straight up and over the ridges leading to Mt Twynam.

The rest of us rounded Crummer Spur to the inspiring sight of Mt Kosciuszko and the Main Range unfolding before us. Although it's not a rugged landscape, there is a fantastic feeling of space and grandeur. Eventually Blue Lake came into view, its rocky outcrops bursting through a shroud of snow.

Snow-camping tips

Water

When snow-camping you're surrounded by frozen water—it's a pity you can't drink it! To melt snow more efficiently compact it down in the pot and add a little water before heating. This helps to transfer the heat as the trapped air in uncompacted snow slows down the melting process. Once melted, use a small plastic funnel to pour it into a bottle.

Tents

Snow-camping is great—you can create a perfectly flat tent-site almost anywhere! Select the site and stamp down the area with your skis still on, then scrape and push the snow with your skis to create that billiard-table surface. On steeper ground it will be necessary to use the snow-shovel. Set up your tent but don't enter it for a little while; give the snow time to consolidate. Don't put all your weight on one knee when in the tent as this may put a big hole in your level floor.

The capacity of a tent's vestibule can be substantially increased by digging the vestibule floor area out so that it is about 60 centimetres below the rest of the tent floor. This allows safer cooking in the vestibule and room for pack storage. You can also step into the vestibule and zip it up before opening the inner tent if the weather is bad, helping to keep unwanted snow from entering the warm inner sanctum of the tent.

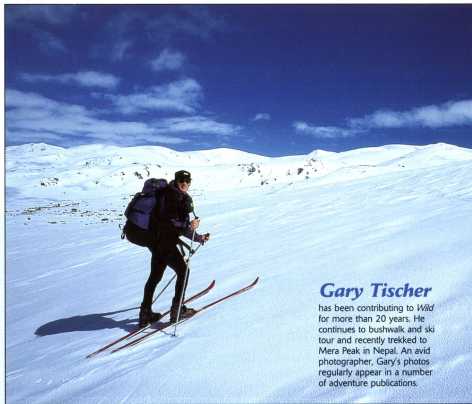
One of the less appealing aspects of snow-camping is that it is dark and very cold by 5.30 pm and doesn't get light again until about 7 am. This is a long time to be confined to a small tent! If there are four or more in the party consider taking an extra, floorless tent to use as a mess tent for the evenings and for storing the food and cooking gear. (A Black Diamond Megamid or a similar design is great.) Dig out the snow to create a table and chairs.

If your tent requires pegs for its structural integrity, take long snow-pegs for the corners. The top few centimetres of snow will soften on hot days, which can cause short pegs to pull out if tensioned.

It was impossible not to let out a shout of excitement. Michael had snowshoed over the top and arrived before us; already he was halfway round the lake. His figure was dwarfed by the rock, snow and ice giving the scene a sense of scale. A huge cornice

overhung one section of cliff, a crevasse opened up near another.

The rest of the party explored this magnificent cirque but Carruthers Peak beckoned; from the top I would be able to see the snow-capped peaks of Victoria. As I strode towards



Gary Tischer

has been contributing to *Wild* for more than 20 years. He continues to bushwalk and ski tour and recently trekked to Mera Peak in Nepal. An avid photographer, Gary's photos regularly appear in a number of adventure publications.

Warmth

Cold feet are inevitable at some time when snow-camping. Take a pair of bivvy boots: the warmth they provide will be worth the extra weight, especially if you're using leather ski boots. Plastic-boot inners can be used as bivvy boots but will become damp and cold after a few days.

Consider taking a pee bottle for those long, cold, snowy nights. (May be easier for males!)

Entertainment

Take a book—you may be snowbound in a small tent. A small radio with 'am' reception is good for listening to weather reports on long back-country trips.

Skiing

At some stage on a back-country ski trip you are likely to encounter conditions in which the base of your skis will gradually pick up large amounts of snow. This is called balling up and will make skiing considerably more difficult, if not impossible. Take some glide wax to wipe on your skis to alleviate this problem.

Washing-up

In many ways is easier to wash up in the snow than in a warm environment. Simply push the dishes into the snow dirty-side down and twist them around—the snow crystals will scrape off the majority of your slops. Then clean with a scourer and warm water as usual. Simple, but remember some silver-lined rubber gloves; at -5°C your hands will get cold!

The author on his trusty skis, Mt Kosciuszko in the background.

the snow-covered tourist path, I could see the lake much as I had only a few months earlier—it looked so different in winter.

As I climbed higher, the snow gave way to wind-scoured ice. I reached a point where my skis' metal edges were the only things stopping me from sliding off a massive cornice and over a 50 metre drop. I retreated slowly, stopping for a drink lower down and taking my skis off for the first time in hours. I realised that in my plastic boots I could kick steps in the ice and get a safe grip; time was against me climbing Carruthers Peak but I might reach the saddle between it and Mt Twynam.

As I climbed in my boots the Sentinel came into view; I let out another excited shout. The garbled, ice-laden rocks showed the harshness of the environment while the western slopes below me dropped 1700 metres to the green Geehi valley. I was alone but felt at home in this place of contrasts.

It only took me 15 minutes to ski down what had taken me an hour and a half to climb. Leg muscles burning from the descent, I met the rest of the group as they prepared to head back to camp. At the end of the day, back at the tents and preparing for another cosy night, we all agreed: skiing the Main Range had, in fact, been a good idea. 🏔️

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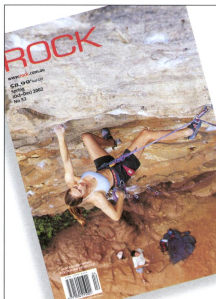
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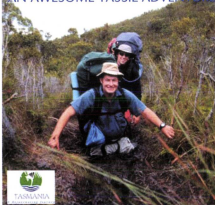
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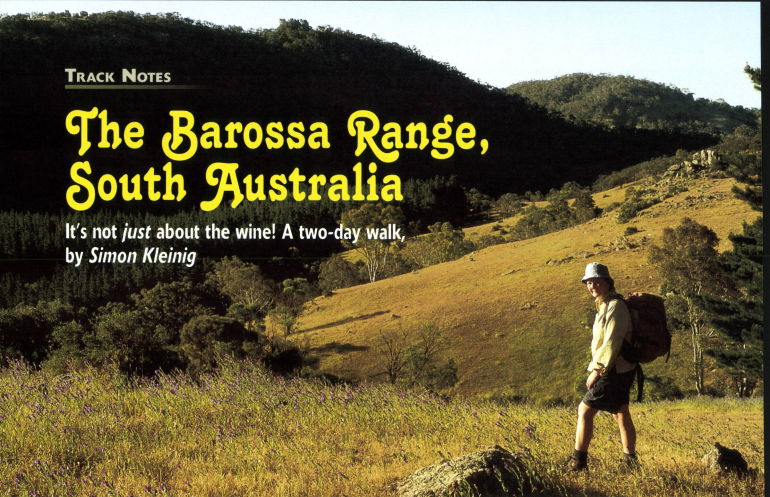
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The Barossa Range, South Australia

It's not *just* about the wine! A two-day walk,
by Simon Kleinig



Denise Kleinig prepares to climb on to 'the Emperor's Seat', Kaiserstuhl (left). Little Kaiserstuhl is on the right.
Both photos Simon Kleinig

THE BAROSSA RANGE IS ABOUT AN HOUR'S DRIVE NORTH OF ADELAIDE, characterised by rocky outcrops and stony slopes. Here the bones of the land are laid bare, covered with she-oaks, banksias and old, gnarled gums. If you happen to be a bushwalker with an appreciation of fine wine, this walk could be for you. A straightforward ramble will take you through part of the range where you can see for yourself the nature of the country that produces many world-famous wines. And before or after your journey you can visit the Barossa wineries for tastings, and perhaps buy a bottle or two of whatever flavoursome drop takes your fancy.

Kaiserstuhl is a well-known peak in the Barossa Range. At a modest height of 590 metres it may appear a fairly unremarkable feature on the map, but in reality it's a massive bulk of a mountain and the panoramic views from its upper slopes are exciting in all directions. The peak was quite remote until a few years ago; a hut and its close proximity to the Heysen Track now makes access easier. Despite being near the tourist trappings of the Barossa Valley the area still retains a distinct feel of remoteness, with an abundance of native vegetation and plenty of kangaroos. From the summit of Kaiserstuhl familiar names found on dozens of wine labels lie right at your feet: Rowland Flat, Orlando, Seigersdorf, Krondorf, Steingarten, Grant Burge, St Halletts—the list goes on. The slopes of Kaiserstuhl form part of the watershed of Jacobs Creek and from these modest beginnings the stream winds its busy course around interlocking spurs to the Barossa Valley below, its famous name carried on wine labels across the world. A short distance further south, cradled in the gentle folds of the range, lies Pewsey Vale where high-altitude vineyards produce the crisp, delicate wines for which this area is famous.

When to go

The best time to visit the Barossa Range is in spring when the first appearance of wild flowers coincides with the bud burst of the vines. For a few weeks in late August and early September the slopes of the range are awash with brilliant blooms of golden wattle—this display alone makes the trip worth while. Summer months are usually too

hot for bushwalking and the section of the Heysen Track followed on this walk is closed between 1 December and 31 March.

Maps

The *Barossa* and *Angaston* 1:50 000 maps cover this region. Rossiter Hut is found at GR 162703 on the *Barossa* map. A more practical alternative may be to use *Heysen Track Map No 9* (Peters Hill to Barossa Range) although this map does not show a portion of the Kaiserstuhl Conservation Park.

History

George Fife Angas, a founder of SA and early landholder, sponsored the settlement of many German religious refugees in 1842 to assist in the development of the fledgling colony. Angas instructed Johann Menge, a German mineralogist, to survey the Barossa Range and it was he who named Kaiserstuhl (the Emperor's Seat) for its similarity to a peak of the same name in the Rhine Valley. Because of the outbreak of the First World War, in 1916 a Nomenclature Committee was appointed to remove 'enemy' place-names from SA. Kaiserstuhl was patriotically renamed Mt Kitchener and even though Kaiserstuhl still remained in local use, it wasn't until 1975 that the name was officially restored to maps. The Kaiserstuhl area was owned by a succession of farming families until it was acquired by Forestry SA in the 1970s. In 1944 an aircraft drifted off course in bad weather and crashed into the southern slopes of Kaiserstuhl. There were no survivors. At the time it was SA's worst air disaster.

Permits

Rossiter Hut is in the Pewsey Vale section of Mt Crawford Forest and is managed by Forestry SA. A fee of \$3 is charged for use of the hut and camp-sites. As the hut door is fitted with a combination padlock, it is essential to contact the Mt Crawford Information Centre on (08) 8524 6004 (open 9 am to 11 am, seven days) to obtain a

permit and gain access. If you prefer to use your tent there are plenty of flat, grassy camp-sites nearby and a lofty view overlooking Kaiserstuhl that will take your breath away.

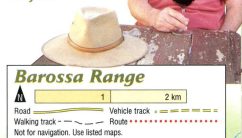
Access

The Barossa Range is a little over an hour's drive from Adelaide. Travel north to Gawler and take the Barossa Valley Highway to Lyndoch and Tanunda. At a T-junction just before Tanunda turn right into Bethany Road and travel four kilometres, then bear left and go a further two kilometres to Menglers Hill road. Turn right for four kilometres to Tanunda Creek road. Turn right again and a further four kilometres will bring you to the entrance of Kaiserstuhl Conservation Park.

Day one

Kaiserstuhl Conservation Park is an untouched area of dense native bushland interspersed with enormous granite outcrops. These have been weathered into fascinating shapes that are almost Tolkienesque; this unusual combination of geology and vegetation provides some very attractive walking. From the park entrance follow the Wallowa (a type of wattle) Loop Track south-west across a pleasant area of low-lying sedges overlooked by some very old red gums. Before long you enter an area of woodland containing stands of ancient, brown stringybarks with a thick understorey of spinifex and grass-trees. After walking about two-and-a-half kilometres leave the park and turn south to join the Heysen

Simon Kleinig practices what he preaches at a Barossa Valley vineyard.



the walk AT A GLANCE

Grade	Easy-moderate
Length	Two days
Distance	18 kilometres
Type	Areas of untouched native bushland and radiata pine forest, good views and a steep climb
Region	Mid-north South Australia
Nearest town	Tanunda
Start, finish	Kaiserstuhl Conservation Park
Maps	Barossa, Angaston 1:50 000; Heysen Trail Map No 9 (Peters Hill to Barossa Range)
Best time	May–October
Special point	Celebrate your walk with a visit to a Barossa Valley winery

Track near a high wall of radiata pines (the Pewsey Vale section of Mt Crawford Forest), then turn right at a sign to Rossiter Hut. From this track there are panoramic views across the Barossa Range as it winds gently downhill towards the hut. Just before reaching the hut you emerge from a forest track to an open clearing: suddenly the majestic bulk of Kaiserstuhl lies right before you, its long, arching ridge dominating the skyline and a forest of pines and river gums nestling around its foot. The hut was built around 1880 by German settler Otto Pohlner, but has recently been refurbished. It has bunks for six people, a cosy fireplace, rainwater tank and nearby toilet. Please note that the fireplace cannot be used between 1 November and 30 April as Rossiter Hut is close to dense forest.

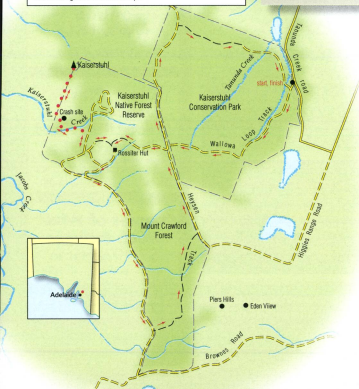
The climb to the summit of Kaiserstuhl is the highlight of this walk. The ascent is long and steep but not particularly difficult, entailing a two-hour return journey from Rossiter Hut. From the hut walk north-west down the lower forest track and turn left just past the first gate. Carefully follow a row of aluminium markers across an open slope, then downhill through forest to an area of open grassland

leading to Kaiserstuhl Creek (actually the upper reaches of Jacobs Creek). The height gain from the bed of Kaiserstuhl Creek to the summit of Kaiserstuhl is 350 metres. A marker indicates the path to the crash site, a stiff 200 metre scramble up the southern slopes of Kaiserstuhl. A small cairn has been built directly over the impact point of the aircraft's nose, while small craters made by the engines can still be seen on either side. From here, side west across the steep slopes of the mountain until you meet a drystone boundary wall, a tangible legacy of pioneer days when labour was cheap and time plentiful. Follow this low wall to the summit. The climb is steep but there are wonderful views out across the Barossa Valley. These western slopes are made of extensive boulderfields which support only occasional stands of grass-trees and native grasses, recalling the Aboriginal name for the mountain: Patpoori (Big Grass Hill). After passing some hardy, weather-beaten stands of old she-oak and banksia you will arrive at the summit cairn and trig point. The views from the summit are good if somewhat obstructed by vegetation. Make your way down the southern slopes of the mountain following the natural slope of the ridge to Kaiserstuhl Creek. From Kaiserstuhl Creek retrace your route back to Rossiter Hut.

Day two

From Rossiter Hut follow the loop track southwards along a forest track for about three kilometres, passing several huge red gums and granite outcrops with wonderful views across the Barossa Range to Trial Hill and Pewsey Vale Peak. The track borders Pewsey Vale vineyard for about 400 metres, then turns left at the Heysen Track and heads north-east along a dark forest corridor where your footsteps will be muffled by a thick carpet of pine needles. The next three-and-a-half kilometres take you through an interesting combination of pine forest and dense native scrub with unobstructed views across the range until you enter Kaiserstuhl Conservation Park again. Follow the track north through dense woodland, passing several enormous granite tors. After one-and-a-half kilometres leave the Heysen Track and turn right at the Wallowa Loop Track, descending slowly through thick scrub and granite outcrops to an open, marshy region of tea-trees and blue gums. Another two kilometres and a final stretch of grassland will return you to the main gate and your car. 🚗

Simon Kleinig's German forebears settled in the Barossa Valley in 1854. He has always felt a close affinity with the region and much of his early childhood was spent around there. He continues to be drawn back to the distinctive, rounded peaks of the Barossa Range.



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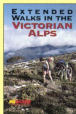
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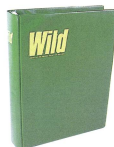
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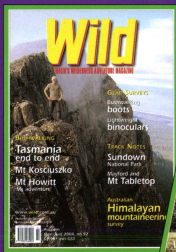
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Second skin

A survey of waterproof jackets for bushwalking,
by Scott Edwards

Wild Gear Surveys: what they are and what they're not

The purpose of *Wild Gear Surveys* is to assist readers in purchasing specialist outdoors equipment of the quality and with the features most appropriate for their needs; and to save them time and money in the process.

The cost of 'objective' and meaningful testing is beyond the means not only of *Wild*, but of the Australian outdoors industry in general and we are not aware of such testing being regularly carried out by an outdoors magazine anywhere in the world. Similarly, given the number of products involved, field testing is beyond the means of Australia's outdoors industry. *Wild Gear Surveys* summarise information, collate and present it in a convenient and readily comparable form, with guidelines and advice to assist in the process of wise equipment selection.

Surveyors are selected for their knowledge of the subject and their impartiality. Surveys are checked and verified by an independent referee, and reviewed by *Wild's* editorial staff. Surveys are based on the items' availability and specifications at the time of the relevant issue's production; ranges and specifications may change later. Before publication each manufacturer/distributor is sent a summary of the surveyor's findings regarding the specifications of their products for verification.

Some aspects of surveys, such as the assessment of value and features—and especially the inclusion/exclusion of certain products—entail a degree of subjective judgement on the part of the surveyor, the referee and *Wild*, space being a key consideration.

'Value' is based primarily upon price relative to features and quality. A product with more elaborate or specialised features may be rated more highly by someone whose main concern is not price.

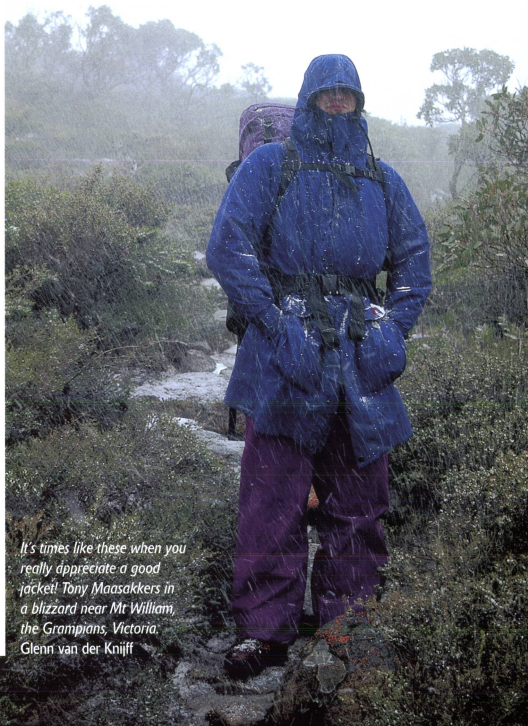
An important criterion for inclusion is 'wide availability'. To qualify, a product must usually be stocked by a number of specialist outdoors shops in the central business districts of the major Australian cities. With the recent proliferation of brands and models, and the constant ebb and flow of their availability, 'wide availability' is becoming an increasingly difficult concept to pin down.

Despite these efforts to achieve accuracy, impartiality, comprehensiveness and usefulness, no survey is perfect. Apart from the obvious human elements that may affect assessment, the quality, materials and specifications of any product may vary markedly from batch to batch and even from sample to sample. It is ultimately the responsibility of readers to determine what is best for their particular circumstances and for the use they have in mind for gear reviewed.

THE STRONGEST MEMORIES I HAVE OF MY first waterproof jacket are undoubtedly of the odours. It was a heavy japara that required the application of smelly grease to keep the rain at bay. Its lack of breathability often meant that it was just as wet on the inside as the outside and it could walk by itself at the end of a big trip. Dry japara was an improvement but nothing matched the comfort of my first Gore-Tex—this miracle

fabric was waterproof, breathable and lighter. These days there are many fabrics with similar characteristics and bushwalkers have a bewildering array of options.

To understand how these waterproof, breathable fabrics work is often perplexing; however, the overall principles are the same. Liquid water molecules weakly attract each other and bond together to form droplets. If that liquid is warmed a little, the water



It's times like these when you really appreciate a good jacket! Tony Maasackers in a blizzard near Mt William, the Grampians, Victoria.
Glenn van der Knijff

molecules begin to break their bonds and go solo, resulting in water vapour. Most waterproof, breathable fabrics use some type of membrane that keeps liquid out (for example, water droplets) but allows vapour (evaporating sweat) to pass through. In essence, manufacturers are emulating human skin; some fabrics even have surgical uses.

The vapour also needs a driving force or differential to make it travel through the fabric. If the inside of your jacket becomes warm and/or humid while the outside weather is cold and/or dry, there'll be a large amount of vapour transfer—the jacket will breathe really well and the harder you work, the more it will breathe. However, the less difference, the lower the breathability. It's no great stretch of the imagination to see that many of these jackets will perform poorly in hot, humid weather. Ultimately these fabrics try to keep the rain out while reducing the level of moisture on the inside to maintain an acceptable level of comfort in the worst conditions.

The number of waterproof, breathable bushwalking jackets available is mind-boggling, making a survey of individual jacket styles formidable for both the surveyor and the reader! The lack of consistent and independ-

Waterproof jackets for bushwalking

	Fabric make and type	Fabric features	Comments	Approx price \$
Black Wolf China www.blackwolf.com.au				
Amazon	Gore-Tex Duraflex	3L, PTFE, Lam	Women's jacket; vented pockets, map pocket	450
Ventura	As above	As above	Men's jacket; vented pockets, map pocket	450
Cloudveil China www.cloudveil.com				
Drizzle	Cloudburst 2.5	2L, PU, Co	Men's and women's sizes; lightweight; pit-zips; underarm stretch panels	500
Koven	Cloudburst Stretch EV3	3L, PU, Lam	Men's and women's sizes; stretch fabric; waterproof zips; pit-zips	650
Fairydown China www.fairydown.co.nz				
Equinox	Hydrepel	3L, PU, Lam	Long length; large storage pockets	300
Wild	Gore-Tex	3L, PTFE, Lam	Long length; low cost; cargo pockets	400
Phantom	Gore-Tex XCR	As above	Quick-fix attachment and pocket for GPS or compass	600
Gondwana China www.gondwanaoutdoor.com.au				
Rainbird Halogen	Raintec	3L, PU, Lam	Lightweight	120
Colo	Tritec	As above	Long length; low cost; cargo pockets	230
Peron	Tritec	2L, PU, Co	Women's cut; low cost	230
Huski Explorer China www.huski.net				
Hass	unbranded	2L, PU, Co	Men's jacket; sizes 5–3XL	160
Louize	unbranded	As above	Women's jacket; sizes 10–18	160
Kathmandu China www.kathmandu.com.au				
Virga	NGX Plus	3L, PU, Lam	Long length; storm-flap over front zip	400
Stormfront	Gore-Tex and stretch Gore-Tex	3L, PTFE, Lam	Double storm-flap; seamless shoulder panels	580
Iceline	Gore-Tex XCR	As above	Shorter length; water-resistant zips; stretch panel; seamless shoulder panels	800
Lowe Alpine China www.lowealpine.com				
Fugitive	Triplepoint Ceramic	3L, PU, Lam	Men's and women's sizes; pit-zips; stretch fabric over shoulders; zip-off snow skirt	540
Macpac China www.macpac.co.nz				
Hollyford	Gore-Tex Taslan	3L, PTFE, Lam	Large hand/storage pockets; articulated sleeves	450
Resolution	Gore-Tex XCR	As above	Men's and women's sizes; long length; water-resistant front-pocket zip; cargo pockets	700
Marmot China www.marmot.com				
Rim	Precip Plus	3L, PU, Lam	Men's and women's sizes; pit-zips; stretch fabric; tuck-away hood	400

Buy right

- Does the fabric offer the required levels of waterproofness and/or breathability for your intended use? High-aerobic use might require more breathability and lower water resistance. Remote, alpine bushwalking might require extreme waterproofness.
- When you lift your arms is the cuff still near your wrist? Does the jacket ride up around your waist?
- Does it cover your bottom when you sit down? Some people are bothered by this, others aren't.
- Don't get your jacket too big—if it's too baggy it won't breathe as well.
- How does the jacket feel when wearing a pack? Does it ride up at the back?
- Are the pockets useful and accessible when wearing a pack? Are they adequately weatherproofed on both the inside and outside?
- Does the hood move with your head? Is the adjustment easy to perform with gloves or even mitts?
- Are the cuffs snug? It can be a water entry-point.
- Will the jacket be suitable for your other activities such as skiing, climbing, trekking or travel? One jacket may or may not do it all. Maybe you need two? Or three? Or...
- Do you really need pit-zips? They expel heat but can be bulky and uncomfortable.



A longer style of jacket such as the Macpac Resolution provides leg protection from rain or harsh scrub.

ently tested data for different fabrics also makes it difficult to rate jackets on technical facets such as waterproofness. Instead, this survey aims to provide information on fabrics, design and technical specifications so that readers can cut through the marketing and 'tech-speak' to choose a jacket suitable for their needs. There are many more jackets available than are listed in the survey; the table contains a selection designed to show the range of fabrics, designs and prices available from different manufacturers.

Design

Jacket length is very much a personal preference. A long jacket (around the knees) provides serious walkers with leg protection from rain or harsh scrub. This can be a real advantage in warm-mild, wet weather as the jacket will keep your shorts dry. Alpine users such as climbers or skiers prefer shorter, waist-length styles for greater freedom of movement. This is often at the expense of weather protection although waterproof pants are always an option. Multipurpose users often look for a compromise, hence the prevalence of three-quarter-length styles available.

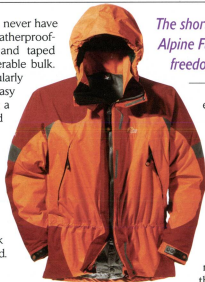
Your jacket should allow you comfortably to wear insulation layers such as fleece garments as the jacket on its own won't keep you very warm. A good cut will enhance freedom of movement and reduce bulk—there's no need for it to fit like a kaftan. Zips are likely entry points for water and should be protected by storm flaps (preferably doubled). Don't forget to keep them closed in wet weather! Water-resistant zip closures work well and are less bulky but these jackets tend to be at the more expensive end of the scale.

Waterproof jackets for bushwalking continued

Fabric make and type	Fabric features	Comments		Approx. price, \$
Mont Fiji/China www.mont.com.au				
Austral/Siena	Hydranaut	3L, PU, Lam	Men's, women's and kid's sizes; lightweight three-quarter length jacket; compact	290
Tempest	Hydranaut Pro	As above	Men's and women's sizes; three-quarter length jacket	430
Maverick	As above	As above	Double storm-flap; pit-zips; articulated elbows	500
Mountain Designs China www.mountaindesigns.com				
Meridian	Gore-Tex Classic	3L, PTFE, Lam	Mid-thigh length jacket; raglan sleeves and articulated elbows	430
Stratos	Gore-Tex XCR	As above	Heavy-duty fabric in high-wear areas, supple fabric in body; pit-zips	600
Outdoor Expedition China www.raysoutdoors.com.au				
Outdoor Expedition Gore-Tex	Gore-Tex	3L, PTFE, Lam	Sizes S-2XL; inner GPS and security pockets	500
Paddy Pallin China www.paddypallin.com.au				
Vital	Gore-Tex Stormtech	3L, PTFE, Lam	Unisex style; robust jacket in simple design	360
Vista	Gore-Tex XCR Stormtech	As above	Men's and women's sizes; abrasion-resistant fabric; patented 'Watergate' closure	570
Snowgum China www.snowgum.com.au				
Storm	Vaportec	3L, PU, Lam	Long length; hand-warmer pockets, Napoleon pocket	250
Barrington	Gore-Tex	3L, PTFE, Lam	As above	400
Abbey/Arlington	Gore-Tex XCR	As above	Men's and women's styles; long length; two tone; hand-warmer, patch and Napoleon pockets; tuck-away hood	500
The North Face China www.thenorthface.com				
Flight Jacket	Hyvent Ascend and Hyvent Stretch	3L, PU, Lam	Men's and women's sizes; lightweight; ventilation zips; stretch panels	500
Wild Country China www.raysoutdoors.com.au				
Survivor	Emphatex	3L, PU, Lam	Sizes S-2XL	300
Wild Country Pacite	Gore-Tex Pacite	2L, PU, Lam	Sizes S-2XL; lightweight	500
Wilderness Wear China www.wildernesswear.com.au				
Strider	Chameleon	3L, PU, Lam	Double storm-flap; large cargo pockets, concealed map pocket	340
Million Miler	Chameleon	As above		350
Cascade	Chameleon Plus	As above	Reflective piping; concealed map pocket	400

Fabric features: 2L, two layer, 3L, three layer, PU, polyurethane membrane, PTFE, polytetrafluoroethylene membrane, Coated layer construction, Laminated layer construction †1 not seen by referee The country listed after the manufacturer/brand name is the country in which the products are made

It seems that you can never have enough pockets but weatherproofing such as closures and taped seams can add considerable bulk. Map pockets are particularly useful but should be easy to reach when wearing a rucksack. Hoods should be comfortable to wear with a beanie and the face opening should be reducible to goggle size. The hood should move with your head—there's nothing worse than seeing a view of fabric instead of the track when you turn your head.



The shorter cut of the Lowe Alpine Fugitive offers greater freedom of movement.

ence the fabric's characteristics. Soft, thin and supple fabrics feel great to wear and breathe well but are generally not as durable. Heavier fabrics are more durable but bulkier, and can lead to a reduction in breathability. In many cases, an inner mesh layer is bonded to the membrane to produce a three-layer fabric. These fabrics are commonly used

Fabric features

The waterproof, breathable membranes are bonded to an outer material such as nylon or polyester to protect them from abrasion, forming a two-layer fabric. The thickness or weave of the outer (or face) material that is applied to the membrane can greatly influ-

ence the fabric's characteristics. Soft, thin and supple fabrics feel great to wear and breathe well but are generally not as durable. Heavier fabrics are more durable but bulkier, and can lead to a reduction in breathability. In many cases, an inner mesh layer is bonded to the membrane to produce a three-layer fabric. These fabrics are commonly used

Some lightweight fabrics use thinner membranes—these are more breathable but less water resistant. They may be waterproof in light or moderate rain but the heavy pressure of a deluge can force moisture through. Conversely, some fabrics are highly waterproof but offer limited breathability. The more expensive fabrics usually combine high levels of both breathability and waterproofness.

Waterproof, breathable fabrics are constructed in many different ways. Some more common membranes are constructed using polyurethane (PU) or polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) to create monolithic, microporous or bi-component membranes.

Monolithic membranes rely on molecular 'stepping-stones' to transport water mo-

Other brands available

Brand	Distributor	Contact
Arc'teryx	Outdoor Agencies	(02) 9438 2266
Berghaus	As above	
Columbia	Columbia Sportswear	(07) 3114 4311
Earth Sea Sky	Earth Sea Sky	www.earthseasky.co.nz
GoLite	Sea to Summit	1800 787 677
Helly Hansen	Blue Rock	(03) 9338 5326
Karrimor	Aktiv8	(02) 9939 5611
Makalu	Makalu	(03) 9428 2516
Mountain Hardware	Snowgum	1800 811 312
Extreme Mountain Spirit	Extreme Mountain Spirit	(03) 9654 5333
Oringi	Oringi Protection Wear	(03) 5962 2823
Salewa	Intertrek	(02) 9476 0672
Tatanka	Outdoor Survival	(03) 9775 1916
Three Peaks	Wilderness Wear	(03) 9416 9000

lecules as vapour through the fabric; in this, one polymer molecule passes a water molecule on to another. Microporous membranes have pores in which the holes are large enough to allow water molecules to pass through as vapour but small enough to keep water droplets out. Bi-component membranes do a bit of both: the pores don't clog as much as the other two types. These membranes are often also oleophobic (oil repelling) which helps to keep the pores contaminant free.

If the face fabric of a jacket begins to hold water it is a problem as the membrane can't breathe properly if the escaping vapour hits

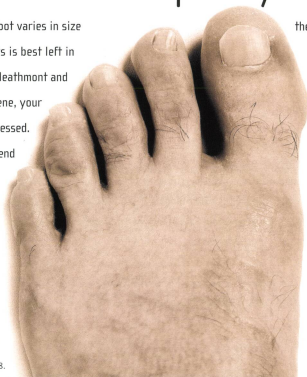
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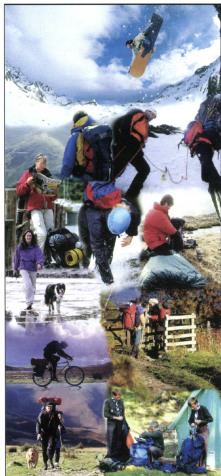
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Brand of waterproof, breathable PU membrane. Chameleon Plus has higher specifications.

Cloudburst

Brand of waterproof, breathable PU membrane.

Coating

The membrane is applied directly to the protective outer fabric during manufacture.

DWR

Durable, water-repellent coating is applied to the protective outer fabric to repel water and maintain breathability of the garment.

Emphatex

Brand of waterproof, breathable PU membrane.

Gore-Tex

Brand of waterproof, breathable PTFE membrane produced by W L Gore. Laminated to various outer materials to create fabrics such as Gore-Tex Taslan, Stormtech, Classic and Duraflex.

Gore-Tex Paclite and Gore-Tex XCR

New generation of waterproof, breathable PTFE membranes by W L Gore that have enhanced breathability.

Hydrepel

Brand of waterproof, breathable PU membrane.

Hydronaute

Brand of waterproof, breathable PU membrane. Hydronaute Pro has higher specifications.

Hyvent

Brand of waterproof, breathable PU membrane.

Laminate

The membrane is bonded by an adhesive to the protective outer fabric.

NGX Plus

Brand of waterproof, breathable PU membrane.

Polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) membrane

Constructed by pumping expansive gases into materials like polytetrafluoroethylene (Teflon) to create the microporous membrane. This is then laminated to a face material for a two-layer laminated fabric, and may be laminated to an inner mesh for a three-layer laminated fabric.

Polyurethane (PU) membrane

Commonly constructed by mixing polyurethane with a solvent and then applying it over an outer material such as nylon or polyester. The solvent evaporates leaving a two-layer fabric with a microporous coating. For strength and protection, a mesh layer can be laminated on to the inside creating a three-layer laminated fabric. Or is it really a coating? Call it what you want.

Precip Plus

Brand of waterproof, breathable PU membrane incorporating silicon particles for increased protection from contamination by oils and dirt.

Raintec

Brand of water-resistant, breathable PU membrane.

Three-layer fabric

A membrane is laminated and/or applied to an outer material such as nylon or polyester and an inner material (often a mesh).

Triplepoint Ceramic

Brand of waterproof, breathable PU membrane incorporating ceramic particles for added durability.

Tritec

Brand of waterproof, breathable PU membrane.

Two-layer fabric

A membrane is laminated or applied to an outer material such as nylon or polyester.

Vaportec

Brand of waterproof, breathable PU membrane.

a wall of water. This often leads people to believe that their jacket is leaking, when in actuality it's just not breathing. Internal condensation can build up rapidly, especially during exertion. A durable, water-repellent coating (DWR) is applied to the face fabric to enable it to shed water and help maintain breathability. Over time the DWR will wear out and the outer fabric may become sodden and heavy. It can be rejuvenated a number of times with an iron or tumble-drier on low. If this doesn't work, the DWR is probably completely worn out but is easily re-applied. Bottles of DWR solution can be purchased from most outdoors shops.

Other breathability problems may occur at points covered by rucksack straps or pockets filled with items such as maps; don't expect the moisture to escape if it is blocked by a barrier. Opening up front zips, pit-zips or similar measures can be great for letting out heat build-up from inside the jacket although it decreases the internal humidity and so may reduce breathability. You should cool down but you may not get rid of the moisture as quickly.

Breathability also depends on how many layers are worn under a jacket. If you have three layers of fleece and thermals beneath your outer layer breathability will be severely compromised and there may be condensation. Using clothes that wick moisture away from the skin to the outer clothing layers will help to minimise moisture build-up.

It would be great to have a list of specifications that allowed you to rate and choose jackets. Unfortunately, there are no standardised tests for breathability or waterproofness—treat manufacturers' claims with caution. It's very easy to choose testing variables that favour one product over another; it's a practice otherwise known as marketing. Purchasing reputable brands from trusted retailers is the best way of ensuring that a jacket will suit your needs. There are no cheap solutions—as always, best performance comes at a price. 

Scott Edwards spends too much time tuning Telemark skis and dreaming of deep snow on Mt Featherbok. When it's not winter he indulges in outdoor pursuits that allow the purchase of many gadgets. He has also been known to go bushwalking.

This survey was refereed by Greg Cave.

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T2 &
T2 LADY



T3 &
T3 LADY



T4 &
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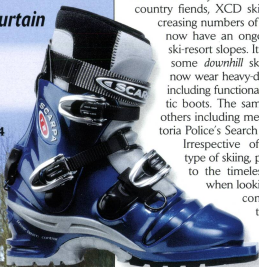
Ski-touring and XCD boots

In the know for on the snow, by Stephen Curtain

Wild Gear Surveys: What they are and what they're not

(See box on page 63.)

SKI-TOURING AND XCD BOOTS HAVE COME A LONG WAY SINCE 1984 when Tim Macartney-Snape wore his leather cross-country boots on his successful climb of Mt Everest. Trusty leather boots are still on the market, alongside a swag of boots of the 'plastic-fantastic' variety, and a couple of variations.



For scores of young (or young-at-heart) skiers of any ability, ski-touring is a good introduction to the delights of cross-country (XC) skiing on groomed trails, or to encourage people to go a little further. Cross-country downhill (XCD) has continued to evolve in recent years. While extended trips to haunts such as Mt Bogong and Carruthers Peak will always be favourites for back-country fiends, XCD skiers—including increasing numbers of Telemark skiers—now have an ongoing presence on ski-resort slopes. It is interesting that some downhill ski-resort patrollers now wear heavy-duty Telemark gear including functional, waterproof plastic boots. The same can be said of others including members of the Victoria Police's Search & Rescue Squad.

Irrespective of your preferred type of skiing, pay close attention to the timeless, critical factors when looking for new boots: comfort and function. While you're bound to see other suitable models in the shops, the following table

shows a good cross-section of boots suitable for general touring—whether day-tours, off-piste thrills or overnight outings—as well as for the XCD/Telemark skier who divides time between using the lift or 'earning turns' in the back country.

Sole material

All models feature a durable, grip-patterned rubber sole (for example, Vibram or Skywalk) or, in the case of the Salomon boots, aggressively patterned cleats. The stiffer the sole, the greater the support and torsional rigidity the boot gives. A stiffer sole is essential for heavy ski-touring and XCD/Telemark, while a more flexible sole is ideal for lighter touring and may be more suitable for trips to easily accessible overnight snow-camps.

Upper material

Boots in which the upper is mostly or wholly leather are generally lightweight and have a soft flex—ideal for day and some overnight touring. Soft-flex boots with a plastic upper or stiffer, more supportive leather boots are excellent for longer ski tours and

Left, Telemark boots can be worn in all kinds of situations! The surveyor and his trusty boots are pulled along by local mutts through remote east Russia. Stephen Curtain. Above, the high tech Scarpa T2.



- Women's trail-sport utility
- 2.0 mm nubuck upper
- Waterproof and breathable Gore-Tex® lining

Passo GTX - sand

Men's available in brown colour



- Men's hiking
- Top-grain leather upper
- Gore-Tex® lining
- Vibram® sole

Syncro - dark brown



- Men's trail-sport utility
- Light hiking, casual wear
- Waterproof and breathable Gore-Tex® lining

Flash - sand

point of contact between technology and nature

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challenge the elements

XCD. Plastic boots invariably keep your feet drier for longer unless you sweat excessively. That said, the initial step-in comfort and lightweight nature of leather-upper boots may win over buyers for some types of skiing.

Between plastic and leather boots is a distinctly different style of boot that uses a combination of leather and synthetic panels. These ski boots offer a blend of versatility, stiffness and support. Similar construction can also be seen in snowboarding and lightweight bushwalking boots.

The feel and flex of boots will vary between models, and between brands. Ensure

Buy right

- **Correct fit:** some models feature a heat-mouldable liner for a custom fit. If not, expect the inner boot to expand after a short while giving a more comfortable fit. Be sure to road-test your boots in the shop by walking around, and simulating ski positions—some retailers may allow you to test your boots at home on the carpet. If you're seeking boots for resort-based skiing only, consider purchasing a slightly tighter fitting inner boot.

Often the best range and advice is to be found in the major regional centres that service our resorts and back-country playgrounds. Many shops offer the consumer the opportunity to test-drive boots or skis, and often boot-and-ski combinations, before purchase. Some will even subtract the 'demo fee' from the purchase price if you decide to buy.

- **The whole package:** ensure that a lightweight-style ski boot is matched with an appropriate lightweight binding and ski. As you slide up the skiing spectrum towards XCD/Telemark gear, the same logic applies but in a distinctly heavier, beefier manner. Or in other words 'fat' boots usually only go with 'fat' skis and 'fat' bindings.

- **Ski leashes:** if you are using a ski leash attach it to the ski binding first and ensure it comfortably reaches its designated ring on your ski boot and is not overstretched.

- **Spare parts:** if you are a dedicated user or remote-area skier, check to see whether spares such as buckles and shell components are available to cover possible wear and tear.



*The Salomon
X-Adventure 5—a
combination of
leather and
synthetic
panels.*

Ski-touring and XCD boots

	Upper material	Height, millimetres	Closure system	Binding system	Weight, grams	Available sizes	Suitability for general touring	Suitability for heavy touring/ XCD	Comments	Approx price, \$
Alpina Slovenia www.alpinasports.com										
BC Tour	Leather	170	Laces	NBC	na	36-49	★★★★	nr	Good basic touring boot	195
BC 1550	Leather	200	Laces, power-strap	NBC	800	36-49	★★★★	●●	Lightweight boot; supportive plastic cuff provides versatility off-trail	270
Andrew Italy www.andrewshoes.com										
Cornice	Leather	195	Laces	75 mm	900	37.5-48	★★★★	●●	A classic leather boot	300
Zenith	Leather	200	Laces, one buckle	75 mm	1110	na	★★★★	●●●	A single buckle provides good support off-piste	380
Crispi Italy www.alpinasports.com										
CXA †	Pebax	280	Three buckles, power-strap	75 mm	1750	42-47	★★★★	●●1/2	Solid, heavy-touring boot; women's sizes available	650
CXP	Pebax	na	As above	75 mm	1650	37.5-46	●●●	★★★★	Excellent resort and back-country boot; women's sizes available	700
CXR †	Pebax	na	Four buckles, power-strap	75 mm	na	na	●●	★★★★	Heavy-duty boot for resort Telemarking and serious back-country slopes	800
Garmont Italy www.garmontusa.com										
Excursion	Pebax	270	Two buckles, power-strap	75 mm	1430	na	★★★★	●●1/2	Excellent heavy-touring boot	460
Veloce	Pebax	270	As above	75 mm	1825	40-48	●●	★★★★	A solid performer for beeline ski-touring and resort Telemarking	770
Syner-G	Pebax	310	Three buckles, power-strap	75 mm	1975	na	nr	★★★★	Performance Telemark boot for lift-serviced skiing and heavy-duty touring	900
Salomon Romania www.salomonnordic.com † † †										
X-Adventure 5	Leather and plastic	na	Laces	X-A	na	35.5-48	★★★★	●●		200
Scarpa Italy www.scarpa.net										
T4	Pebax	270	Two buckles	75 mm	1520	38-48	★★★★	●●1/2	Excellent for touring; women's sizes available	400
T3	Pebax	300	Two buckles, power-strap	75 mm	1575	38-48	●●●	●●●1/2	Sturdy boot, offers touring with greater performance; women's sizes available	590
T2	Pebax	330	Three buckles, power-strap	75 mm	1685	38-48	●●	★★★★	All-round resort and back-country use; women's sizes available	730
● poor ●● average ●●● good ●●●● excellent Upper material: Pebax is a form of plastic Closure system: a power-strap is a Velcro-type closure which holds the foot in place Binding system: NBC Nordic Back Country, X-A a similar binding system to NBC na not available nr not recommended † not seen by surveyor ‡ not seen by referee The country listed after the manufacturer/brand name is the country in which the products are made										

● poor ● average ●● good ●●● excellent **Upper material:** Pebax is a form of plastic. **Closure system:** a power-strap is a Velcro-type closure which holds the foot in place. **Binding system:** NBC Nordic Back Country, X-A a similar binding system to NBC. na not available nr not recommended † not seen by surveyor †† not seen by referee The country listed after the manufacturer/brand name is the country in which the products are made

that you try on the boots in the shop to enable the right choice to be made. (See 'Buy right' box.)

Height and closure system

Boots have various closure systems: buckles, Velcro-style power-straps, traditional laces and zips. Two or more of these closure systems are often used in combination. The boot height was measured from the back of the heel to the top of the cuff. Lower-cut models generally have laces while those with a higher cut feature buckles and a power-strap.

Binding system

For those looking for a serious back-country touring and Telemark set-up, the 75 millimetre Nordic Norm system remains very popular. Many readers would be familiar with the three-pin version where the 75 millimetre welt of your boot is housed in a toe-plate with the binding's three pins inserted into the holes at the front of the boot's sole. This toe-plate set-up (with or without the three pins) is also used in conjunction with any one of a plethora of cable or plate-type binding attachments, including releasable versions. Speak with your outdoors- or

ski-shop specialist as bindings can be confusing to the uninitiated! For the gear freaks out there, a NTN (New Telemark Norm) system has been developed in Europe.

With the functional Nordic Back Country (NBC) binding, the binding clamps around a small, horizontal metal bar on the front of the boot itself. It is usually found on the lighter-weight ski boots, but is still suitable for some back-country applications. Salomon's X-A binding is similar in appearance to the NBC.

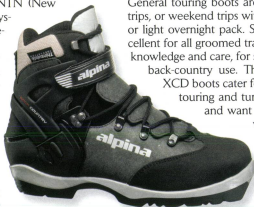
Weight and available sizes

The weight specified in the table is for one medium-sized boot. All sizes are given in the European scale. A women's fit may be available in some boots—check in retail outlets.

Suitability for use

General touring boots are suitable for day-trips, or weekend trips with only a day pack or light overnight pack. Such boots are excellent for all groomed trails and, with prior knowledge and care, for some off-piste and back-country use. The heavy touring/XCD boots cater for skiers who seek touring and turning performance and want more control in a wider range of snow conditions and terrain.

Whether you're on slushy trails, chattering your skis across concrete-like summits or floating in wet powder gullies, this type of distinctly



Traditional leather boots like the Alpina BC 1550 are very lightweight.

heavier boot covers all conditions. These types of boots may be a pleasant surprise—or even an awakening for the aspiring Telemark skier. Flawless, buttery, sweet arcs are just around the corner... 

See page 53 for Stephen Curtain's bio.

This survey was refereed by Simon Langford.

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You call it elbow room.

The MSR Fast & Light™ Tents.

Ultra-Light, Spacious, Versatile, Easy to Set Up.

NEW!



The two-person **HubbaHubba 05** now has 2 doors, is a paltry **1.8 kg** and can be pitched in two freestanding tarp-shelter modes for great weight savings.



The one-person **Hubba** is an astounding **1.3 kg**.



The Missing Link. Combining gargantuan floor space and amazing airflow into a miniscale **1.3 kg** package, this shelter has the weight savings of a tarp and the insect-proof security of a tent.



The Trekker can be used separately as minimalist tarp, or combined with the Tent Insert to create a double wall tent that provides great roominess and protection from insects.

Serious weight savings have always meant making serious compromises in comfort and quality—until now. MSR has created an innovative collection of modular shelters that combine enormous living spaces, durability and versatility into ridiculously light packages. Starting with a high-tech silicone and polyurethane coated nylon fabric, we reduced overall weights by up to 27% without compromising reliability or living space. Then we built up from there.



Twin Peaks – 2 person, and only **0.8kg**, is our most weatherproof tarp-style design with full walls. The doors open fully for easier cooking and additional venting.



The Trekker Wing is a high-performance ultra-minimalist, shaped tarp for the seriously weight-conscious - **0.8 kg**. Excellent ventilation for hot or muggy climates.

The revolutionary new MSR® Fast & Light™ tents are more than just lightweight. They're livable. They've been engineered to dramatically increase interior space while keeping weight to a bare minimum. Simply put, you'll have a tent that's easy to carry, with more room than ever to spread out. So now you'll be comfortable wherever you camp.

MSR

Hot spots and woolly wonders

New **base-layer garments** from **Lowe Alpine** are said to provide varying amounts of warmth and breathability for different body areas, allowing moisture to be shifted from the most needy (or sweaty!) parts. The 'hotspots' of the body are matched by specific, open-knit 'zones' in the garment that are claimed to allow moisture a quick escape. Conversely, warmer material is used in cool spots. The **Dry Zone** garments are made from Dryflo fabric, with the 'zones' seamlessly integrated. Men's and women's garments in the range are customised to allow for the different heat distribution between males and females. Dry Zone garments are available in various models including long-sleeve and short-sleeve tops, tights and underwear. RRP ranges from \$39 for the **Women's Thong** to \$109 for the **Short Sleeve Zip Neck Top**.

Lowe Alpine has also released seven more **Gore-Tex jackets** including the 340 gram **Diablo**. This technical alpine jacket uses Gore-Tex Paclite fabric and microtaped seams for lighter weight, increased breathability and flexibility. **Intertek** distributes Lowe Alpine products; phone (02) 9476 0672 for more details.

Norsetech is a range of **two-layer merino-wool** products from New Zealand company **Norsewear**. The garments have an outer merino-wool layer, with different inner layers depending on the model and intended function. CoolMax is used as the inner layer in the Merino Max clothing to improve wicking, while in the Duo Merino garments a finer merino wool is used on the inside to give the 'ultimate pure merino-wool garment'. High praise from people who know their wool so well! Visit www.norsetech.com for further details. RRP for the long-sleeved, **Racer zip-up** top made from Merino Max is \$199, while the Duo Merino **Cruiser** crew top has a RRP of \$179.

Ramit has a simpler range of **merino-wool base-layer clothing**, offering long- and short-sleeve garments in two weights, long johns and accessories. Phone (08) 9380 6384 for further information about this brand, which is manufactured in Perth. RRP for a short-sleeve lightweight top is \$67.

As well as a catalogue featuring a buff man in skin-tight white clothing, **Linebreak** is responsible for a range

of 'performance sportswear'. Its clothing, historically worn under sports kit, has crossed into the outdoors market through adventure racing. It is said to regulate temperature effectively through wicking, while reducing muscle vibration, assisting blood flow to the heart, and heightening your ability to sense your body's movements. Perfect your pout and you too can be in the catalogue...Visit www.linebreak.com.au for further information. RRP from \$50 to \$100.



Above, Lowe Alpine Dry Zone garments apparently match body hot spots with more breathable fabric. Below, Linebreak's High Performance Tee and Velocity Tights, with matching pout.



Feet retreat

New **bushwalking shoes** from Asolo and Teva use Gore-Tex XCR linings to ensure that the shoes are water-proof but very breathable. The **Asolo Vapor** and **Airborne** (men's and women's models, respectively) have perforated suede outers and very light Vibram soles, producing footwear for the 'adventure traveller who needs a shoe to cope with any situation'. They look good, too! **Intertek** distributes the shoes. RRP \$229-259. The **Teva Steep XCR** has a rubber toe-guard and a leather-and-mesh upper, and looks a pretty sturdy beast. The sole is fairly stiff and uses 'Spider Rubber' for grip. Phone **Accent Group** on (03) 9427 9422 for more information. RRP \$239.



The funky colours of Kathmandu's Inverse shoe.

Kathmandu has released a new range of **bushwalking/travel shoes**, all of which have Vibram soles. The **Inverse** is a suede and mesh shoe that comes in fairly funky/lairy colours (depending whom you ask!) while the **Kepler** is a more sedate shoe, with a Nubuck outer and a stiffer sole for support. Both shoes come in men's and women's fit and are said to be comfortable straight from the box. Visit www.kathmandu.com.au for more information on the shoes. RRP is \$180 for the Inverse, \$250 for the Kepler.

Grangers now has a range of water-based, non-aerosol **waterproofing products for footwear**. The products apparently use an advanced chemistry similar to the durable water-repellent (DWR) coating on new Gore-Tex jackets, except without the need for heat to activate the proofing. The **Footwear Proofer** is approved by Gore, as it is claimed that unlike silicone treatments it won't affect the boot's breathability. It is also said to be a more durable proofing. Grangers chemicals can be used on all types of boots, are safe and environmentally friendly. Phone **Sea to Summit** on 1800 787 677 for more information. RRP for a 100 millilitre bottle of Footwear Proofer is \$20.



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Tofana MFS Wide

Tofana MFS Wide

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- Tofana is made on an especially wide comfort last.
- Lining material: Gore-Tex or leather.
- Air-Active footbed.
- Vibram multigrip sole.
- Sizes 6-12 in half sizes.



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Battle of the sexes, rucksack style

New research apparently showing that women and men carry and organise loads differently was the starting-point for **Lowe Alpine's women's rucksack line**. It is claimed that women like to carry loads lower on their back, so the new range gives greater capacity lower in the rucksack body. The females' preference for organising their loads has resulted in the addition of 'creative pockets' (cross-stitch optional) and load-organisation systems. New colours (of course!) are also featured in the rucksack range, distributed by **Intertek**. Models range from the 65 litre **Merak** bushwalking pack to the climbing pack **Alpine Ascent 35**. RRP for the packs is \$349 and \$199, respectively.

The British company has also developed a new back system said to allow good ventilation. The **Pure Air Zone system** uses aluminium tubing to hold the load away from the body and is claimed to result in good air flow as there is very little back contact.



It is being used on three of Lowe Alpine's **day packs**. These packs also feature an adjustable back, which the design team claim is the simplest yet. Both new designs are used in the 35 litre **Aquila-** and **Cirque Air**; RRP \$219.

Osprey rucksacks have taken custom-fitting one step further—the hip-belt on the **Luna** and **Crescent** models can now be moulded to fit! Shops that stock the packs have an 'oven' in which the hip-belts can be moulded to your bony bits. The rucksacks also come in new sizes; the **Luna** is available in 60, 70 and 85 litres, the **Crescent** in 70, 85 and 110. **Paddy Pallin** distributes the packs, phone 1800 805 398 for details. RRP from \$469 to \$699.

The Lowe Alpine Air Zone system allows very little contact between the back and the pack.

trix

Snuggle successfully!

How to stop that sliding feeling.
by Rob Brittle

If you go on adventures with your partner on a regular basis and like to 'snuggle up' at night you may have experienced the inksome occurrence when your self-inflating mats slide apart due to the wriggling, tossing and turning, with someone invariably ending up on the cold, hard ground.

My partner and I use three-quarter-length Therm-a-Rests, and have glued four ten centimetre lengths of Velcro to one outside edge of each mattress. We carry them separately during the day when we're walking and stick them together at night effectively creating a double mat. I bought the Velcro from Linacraft (I was the only bloke in the store—be brave, lads!) and then used Friesole glue (available from good outdoors stores) to adhere the Velcro to the mattresses. The Velcro sticks positively and the mattresses never slide apart.

Wild welcomes readers' contributions to this section; payment is at our standard rate. Send them to the address at the end of this department.

Knick-Knacks

Away with the fairies

Fairydown clothing is once more! In spring 2003 the apparel range was renamed **Zone** as the result of extensive market research which showed (among other things) that Australian men weren't happy with the connotations of the word 'fairy'! Most of the winter range will now be **Fairydown** once again.

A solution?

Solution, known for its spray-skirts, has a new clothing range to make paddling more pleasant in winter. The neoprene paddling-clothing is claimed to use technical cuts and styles to produce a non-chafing, unrestrictive layer of rubber. The range includes booties, gloves, caps, shorts and tops. RRP's from \$33 for the **Skull Cap**. Contact Sea to Summit for more information.

Girls' night out

Therm-a-Rest has tweaked its range of mats to produce a couple of models designed for women. The **Women's ProLite 4** has more insulation in the torso and feet to keep tootsies toasty, while the shorter length reduces unnecessary weight. The four-season mats are said to weigh only 680 grams. RRP \$209. A three-season model, the **Women's ProLite 3**, is also available.

Stop itch

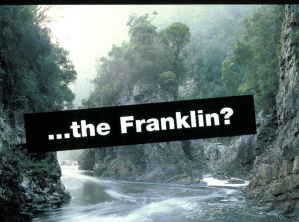
Relief from infuriating itches and relentless scratching may be only a few clicks away... The **Mosquito-Click** is said to eliminate itchiness and inflammation from insect bites through 'piezoelectricity', the generation of electric currents by the compression and expansion of quartz. Simply hold the device over the bite like a syringe and press the button a few times—hey presto, relief in minutes! The device will apparently treat up to 5000 bites. Visit www.mosquitoclick.com for more information. RRP \$20. 



Mosquito-Click: relief from itching is just a click away...

New and innovative products of relevance to the rucksack sports folk loan to **Wild** and/or information about them, including high-resolution digital photos (on CD, not by email or colour slides, are welcome for possible review in this department. Written items should be typed, include recommended retail prices and preferably not exceed 200 words. Send them to **Wild**, PO Box 415, Pahrani, VIC 3181 or contact us by email: editorialadmin@wild.com.au

**Can you imagine
Australia WITHOUT...**



...the Franklin?



...Kakadu?



...Ningaloo Reef?



...or the Styx?



Can you imagine an Australia without the Franklin River, without Kakadu, the Daintree or Ningaloo Reef?

These Australian icons are safe for future generations to enjoy, because thousands of Australians choose to support environment groups, such as The Wilderness Society.

Can you imagine an Australia in which you do not have the choices and opportunities to protect your environment?

In December 2004 Gunns Ltd (Australia's largest export woodchipper) sued The Wilderness Society, five of its staff, plus 14 other groups and individuals – now known as the Gunns 20 – for what it alleges are a series of wrongful acts. Gunns is claiming a total of \$6.4 million in damages from all claims – with over \$3.5m against The Wilderness Society and its officers. We will vigorously defend the claims against us.

This situation presents a huge threat, not only to Tasmania's forests and the future of The Wilderness Society, but also to our right to speak out for the protection of our natural world.

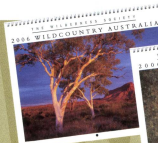
Every Australian who values fairness, choice and opportunity to protect their environment should be concerned. This unprecedented new threat will not stop our vital work across Australia, including our national campaign to protect Tasmania's forests.

Can you imagine an Australia without the Styx giants, without Cape York, without our unique and diverse wildlife? Nor can we. Join us today to help protect these Australian icons for future generations.

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Funding cuts for conservation groups

Andrew Cox, Eli Greig and others report on issues affecting Australian environment groups, including plans for a State-based emissions-trading system

Andrew Cox reports that funding for State-based conservation councils took a major cut when the Federal Government wrote them out of the yearly administrative grants programme. The grants, which had been in place for almost 30 years, were provided to cover administrative function for about 50 environmental organisations throughout Australia.

In April the eligibility criteria were changed without warning so that only groups carrying out 'on-the-ground' projects (such as tree planting or weed control) now qualify. The grants have been capped to a maximum of \$10 000. Most conservation councils received eight to nine times this amount the year before, forming a major proportion of their income. The new rules will seriously effect the capacity of these groups to represent the hundreds of smaller environment groups in each State.

On 11 April, the *Age* reported that Federal Environment Minister Ian Campbell defended the decision, claiming that it would avoid administrative costs, which would lead to more groups receiving money. However, Clive Hamilton, head of the independent Australia Institute, said the change was 'an attempt to silence vocal environment organisations'.

The Australian Conservation Foundation is urging the Federal Government to reconsider its decision, pointing to the long history of bipartisan political support for the grants.

Eli Greig reports that Australian States and Territories have decided to go their own way and establish a unique State-based carbon-trading system. The system will skirt the Federal Government's recalcitrant approach to global warming by establishing a cap that limits the total amount of carbon emissions allowed. Carbon permits will then be issued and the number reduced annually, with companies able to trade in the permits on a new exchange. A commencement date has yet to be announced; some sceptics believe that industrial lobby groups will ultimately scuttle the plan.

In response to the plan ACF Executive Director Don Henry congratulated State Premiers on their leadership but urged a bipartisan commitment from State and Federal Governments. However, the Australian Coal Association says that advances in technology have boosted the prospect for a zero-emissions power station in the Hunter

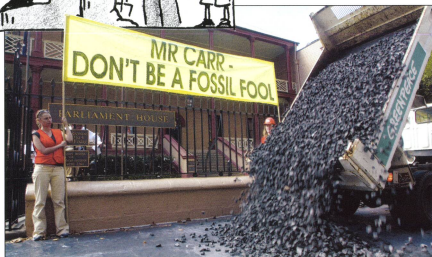
Valley, New South Wales, and thus the need for a national cap and trading scheme will be negated by technological innovation.

In related news, both NSW and Queensland are considering the commission of new coal-fired power stations to meet an ever increasing demand for baseload power. Greenpeace responded by dumping a

land at risk from salinity, pressure on water supplies and an ongoing increase in Australia's net greenhouse-gas emissions.

Eli Greig reports that this follows on from the 'Millennium Ecosystem Assessment', the largest and most comprehensive survey of the world's ecosystems ever undertaken. This was released in March and concluded that human activities threaten the Earth's ability to sustain future generations. The study was written by 1360 experts from 95 countries using scientific evidence widely agreed upon.

It warns of rapid decline in biodiversity and the availability of fresh water. It also predicts that in the coming 50 years the likelihood of disease outbreaks, 'dead zones' in coastal waters and destructive climate shifts will rise sharply. The report recommends ways of slowing some of the damage—



Greenpeace activists dump a tonne of coal at NSW Parliament House to protest against proposals for new coal-fired power stations. Fiona Morris

tonne of coal on the steps of NSW Parliament House.

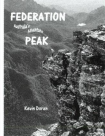
A new study ranks Australia as 13th out of 146 countries in environmental sustainability. The Environmental Sustainability Index was produced by a team of environmental experts at Yale and Columbia Universities in the USA. However, according to the ACF, a report from the Australian Bureau of Statistics on 20 April shows continuing damage to the country's environment. The data show loss of biodiversity through increasing numbers of endangered species and continuing high levels of land clearing, more

developing markets for fresh water, improving forestry practices, removing some agricultural subsidies—but stresses that none of those methods are being applied at present.

▲ Act now

Email or write to Environment Minister Ian Campbell to protest against the cuts to environmental grants. Addresses are: senator.ian.campbell@aph.gov.au or GPO Box B58, Perth WA 6838. You can also contact your State conservation council and ask them how you can help.

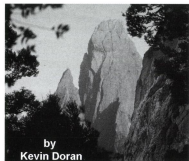
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Budawangs



Draft Bushwalking Strategy

The NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service has prepared a draft strategy to manage the impacts of wilderness walking in the Budawangs area of Morton National Park. This is one of the most popular bushwalking areas in NSW and there is increasing damage in a number of locations.

The draft strategy aims to ensure that the Budawangs is used sustainably. It sets out a number of proposals including track works, a cap on group sizes and tent numbers, restrictions on cave camping and wood fires, a permit system at peak periods, education and monitoring.

Comments on the draft strategy are being sought from the bushwalking community. Copies are available on the national parks website at www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au or by phoning (02) 4423 2170. All submissions must be received by 29 July 2005.

Tasmanian forestry issues

The pulp mill and logging in the island State, by Eli Greig



Old-growth logging near the upper Florentine River, Tasmania, directly adjacent to the World Heritage Area. Eli Greig

The Wilderness Society is taking legal action against the environmental approval process for the planned \$1.2 billion pulp mill at Bell Bay in north-east Tasmania. The action has been lodged in the Federal Court.

TWS's national forests campaigner, Sean Cadman, says Federal Environment Minister Ian Campbell's decision to assess the proposal only on the grounds of marine pollution, threatened species, water-supply and the proposed site ignores the impact the mill would have on the surrounding forests, and those in other parts of the State. The proposed site is close to large areas of native forest in which there are many threatened species including the endangered Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle and the Tasmanian devil. Cadman said: 'We are not opposed to a pulp mill in Tasmania, but we are opposed to this one.'

The Tasmanian Government has announced that it intends to spend at least \$2.5 million over two years to educate Tasmanians on how a pulp mill works. Greens leader Peg Putt said: 'We've never seen any government in Tasmania come out with this sort of money and try and promote a private project to essentially

promote the interests of one private corporate in Tasmania.' The Howard Government has also pledged \$5 million to help to get the mill built. Visit www.wilderness.org.au for more information.

Senator Campbell has rejected an emergency application made by Greens Senator Bob Brown for protection from logging for about 140 hectares of land at Recherche Bay in Tasmania's south. Recherche Bay was the landing site of French explorer Bruni D'Entrecasteaux more than 200 years ago.

Senator Campbell acknowledged the area's heritage values but denied that the area was under any immediate threat. Conservationists have questioned how the area's heritage values will be protected when roadwork contractors will be expected to determine whether there is an archaeological find. More than 1000 protesters gathered at the roadworks in April.

▲ Act now

Send a letter and help to save Recherche Bay. Visit www.recherchebay.org for more details.



Burn at Wilsons Promontory

No April fool,
by Megan Clinton

I was one of the people at Tidal River camp-site on 1 April when 7000 hectares burnt in Victoria's iconic National Park. The fact that no one was injured was based largely on wind direction—luckily, it was blowing away from the 600 campers.

Parks Victoria initially lit the 20 hectare 'controlled burn' and is now comparing the blaze to a small ecological burn—an irresponsible public-relations exercise. Hundreds of animals would have suffocated and burnt as hot northerly winds tore through the Prom.

The fires were lit at the end of a long, dry summer, despite the onset of school holidays and predictions of above-average temperatures and strong northerly winds. Around 13 per cent of Wilsons Promontory was burnt as a result, highlighting what often takes place away from the public eye.

A burn in the Cobboboonee in western Victoria earlier this year killed 138 animals including eight endangered potooroos in a tiny 100 metre radius—the total area burnt was 300 hectares. In Dunmore another fire flared after a fuel-reduction burn was lit in the State Park; it has burnt sections of a private plantation and threatened local homes. Fighting these fires costs money (and a lot of it), as does the reduced tourist numbers to parks such as the Prom.

After the bushfires in the summer of 2003 the Esplin Inquiry reported that fuel-reduction burning was not a panacea for fire. These fires do reduce the fuel in an area, creating a window



Top, the fire raging up Mt Little Oberon at Wilsons Promontory, as seen from Norman Bay Beach, the closest beach to the camping ground at Tidal River. Campers were evacuated to this beach where they spent the night.

Above, Mt Oberon the next day. Both photos Christabel Mitchell

where the fire will burn at a lower intensity and therefore be easier to fight. However, if the area is remote fire-fighters will be unable to take advantage of this window. Burning remote areas is therefore likely to increase risk rather than reduce it.

The Esplin Inquiry also found that most fuel-reduction burns take place outside the nominated fuel-reduction zones; in fact, more than half of these burns occur in areas not nominated for burning. The report stated that this was largely due to burning after logging. Fewer post-logging burns should mean

more resources available for planning and controlling fuel-reduction burns, potentially preventing another Wilsons Prom incident.

TWS is calling for an inquiry into fuel-reduction burning across Victoria.

Eli Greig reports that a number of fires in southern Tasmania in April have reignited the debate over Forestry Tasmania's use of regeneration fires. A fire near Geeveston burnt at least 25 hectares of native forest. Other fires were reported at Esperance, in the Weld Valley, and in the Picton Valley.



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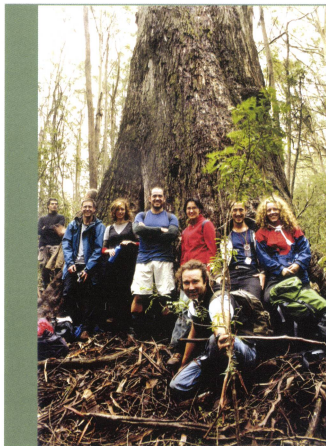
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New parks and promising pitches

Headway in NSW and Victoria

Andrew Cox reports that the total area protected as National Parks in NSW reached six million hectares with the addition of 100 000 hectares of new conservation reserves in March. Far western NSW has been a major focus of the government's National Park expansion efforts during the last seven years and there have been three major additions in this area. Narran Lake Nature Reserve, north-east of Brewarrina, was expanded by 3000 hectares, a 50 per cent increase. A new conservation area of 49 000 hectares at Nombinnie, west of Condobolin, protects the largest stand of mallee in NSW and forms a continuous reserve covering more than 240 000 hectares. Mungo National Park, north-east of Mildura, was expanded by 25 000 hectares.

Central NSW has less than three per cent of its land protected at present and has been flagged for future efforts.

A new Plan of Management (PoM) is close to finalisation for the South East Forest National Park near the south coast of NSW, site of decades of forest protests and logging blockades. The recently exhibited PoM called for the closure of Wog Way, a road that cuts through the heart of the Coolangubra Wilderness. This is an important step for the rehabilitation of this wilderness, yet a large net-



Protesters outside the Victorian State Government's Sustainable Development Conference in March. Eli Greig

work of former logging roads in other parts of the park remain open to four-wheel-drive vehicles and horse-riders.

This follows a demand report by the NSW Ombudsman that found the National Parks & Wildlife Service ignored about 20 000 public submissions in favour of wilderness protection of other areas in southern NSW includ-

ing Deua, Brogo and Kosciusko. At that time, the government limited wilderness boundaries to allow extensive four-wheel-driving and horse-riding.

Meanwhile, Eli Greig reports that Ian McPhail, Victoria's newly appointed environment commissioner, stated that he was uneasy about certain aspects and practices relating to logging in Melbourne's water catchments and the clear-felling of old-growth forests in East Gippsland. He said that he found it 'very difficult to comprehend' that logging occurred in water catchments and on 18 April was quoted in the *Age* as saying: 'Clear-felling close to water catchments brings up a question of opportunity cost. What is more valuable, clean water or trees?'

McPhail also questioned the legitimacy of clear-felling old-growth forests as it accelerated erosion and altered the landscape. He suggested that some form of selective harvesting of forests combined with a job-creating, value-added industry could be a better option. He stated that, 'carefully managed logging...would still permit some of those fine timbers to be used'.

McPhail's comments on these matters seem to concur with those of conservation groups, leading to the anticipation of a significant shift in government policy.

Wood-chips

Devil a threatened species

Eli Greig reports that the Tasmanian Greens have nominated the Tasmanian devil for inclusion on two threatened-species registers. It is hoped that the listing would lead to more research into the facial-tumour disease affecting the species, while also increasing community awareness and consideration of the species in planning and resource-management decisions.

Nick Moody, head scientist in the Department of Primary Industries, believes that an island 'Ark' may have to be set up to preserve the species from the disease. Conservationists in the State's north-west believe that the Tarkine would be a good location for this as the devil population is unaffected by the facial tumours at present, and it should remain that way due to the remote and relatively wild nature of the region.

South Australia's wombats are also under threat. It was reported in the *Age* on 1 March that a scabies-type infestation is wiping out the second largest population

of southern hairy-nosed wombats in SA, in the Murraylands.

Heavy engineering on the wilderness coast?

Local residents claim that ocean access proposed for Bastion Point, near Malaccaota in East Gippsland, will degrade the wilderness coast. The development calls for construction of a boat ramp, a breakwater, road access and a car park, as well as destruction of reef, and permanent sand-dredging equipment. Further details can be found at www.vicnet.net.au/~malcoast

Gandalf's Staff very precious

Gandalf's Staff, the tree in which the Global Rescue Station was perched in the summer of 2003–2004 (see *Wild* no 92), was earmarked for felling this financial year. Eli Greig reports that it is now protected as its measurements exceed the 'Giant Tree' threshold; it was measured at 285 cubic metres, just over the minimum

of 280 cubic metres needed for preservation. Forestry Tasmania has said it will put an appropriate buffer zone around the tree; the Wilderness Society believes that logging of the tree's coupe is now effectively off the agenda.

Protests about logging The Chapel Tree in the Styx Valley in 1999 led to the development of Forestry Tasmania's Giant Tree policy. This tree is now also protected under the policy and is recognised as the second largest living thing in Tasmania. However, much of the surrounding forest remains under threat.

Basslink delay

According to autumn's *Potoroo Review* six out of eight giant transformers being shipped from Germany for use in the controversial Basslink project (see *Wild* no 89) were damaged in transport. This will lead to a year's delay in the project to connect Tasmania and Victoria by an underwater power cable, and lead to financial losses that may well be paid by Tasmanian taxpayers. ☹

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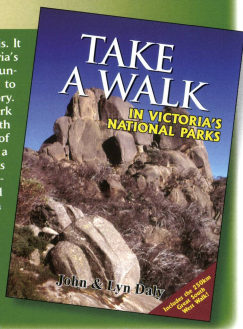
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Take a Walk in Victoria's National Parks

John and Lyn Daly (Take a Walk Publications, 2005, RRP \$29.95).

This book looks substantial, and it is. It has walks in all but four of Victoria's National Parks, from the Murray-Sunset park in the State's north-west to favourites like Wilsons Promontory. Background information on each park and its history is given, along with access directions. There are a range of walk options, each accompanied by a map, although most are day walks and predominantly in the easy-moderate category. The book is well laid out (even though the photos are a little disappointing) and easy to use, with walks grouped under their location and an index that allows you easily to see the walks available. This is a good book to use for exploring Victoria's diverse National Parks.

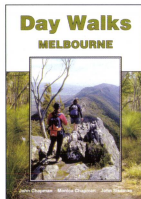
Megan Holbeck



Day Walks Melbourne

John and Monica Chapman, John Sisman (John Chapman, 2005, RRP \$34.95).

Another great book from the experienced team, this is an easy-to-use guide to 41 walking areas around Melbourne. *Day Walks Melbourne* is simply and effectively illustrated to provide an invaluable tool for selecting an appropriate day walk. The track grades, distances and locations from Melbourne are summarised concisely at the front for quick reference and each walk usually features an option to vary the distance and/or grade—invaluable if you are keen to visit a particular area but have time or ability limitations. This book should keep any bushwalker in search



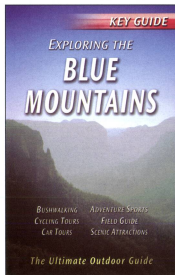
of accessible day walks around Melbourne inspired and occupied for days—it has given me an entirely different view of the city on the weekend!

Zoe Hamilton

Exploring the Blue Mountains

Lenin Cronin Productions (Envirobook, 2004, RRP \$29.95).

Exploring the Blue Mountains offers a great introduction to the area by car, bike or on foot. There is a good selection of five car tours, four cycle tours and 37 bushwalks, most being easy day walks of three hours or less.



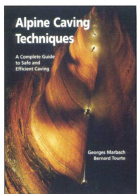
It is practical with a sturdy cover, simple layout, easy-to-read maps and directions, plenty of photos (marred by poor colour reproduction) and a useful wildlife guide. Reference to minimal impact and conservation is absent.

Andrew Cox

Alpine Caving Techniques

Georges Marbach and Bernard Tourte (Speleo Projects, 2002, RRP \$69.95).

This is the self-proclaimed Bible of modern caving. It is an English adaptation of the third French edition, which was published in 2000. Aimed most notably at educating US cavers, who are slowly adopting safer,



more sensible, lightweight techniques, it is certainly very relevant to Australian readers. Everything you could ever think of is included in this publication; there is even a whole bunch of stuff you'd rarely use (for example, nautical techniques!) for the sake of completeness. It's difficult to learn SRT caving from a book but it's certainly worth a good look once you're initiated.

Stephen Bunton

This is the Sea DVD

Cackle TV Productions, (distributed by Everest Films, 2004, RRP \$59.95).

An instructional video this is not, but as a means of educating would-be sea paddlers in the challenges and joys of the sport, it is certainly a strong effort.

I can vouch for film maker Justine Curgenven's adventurous spirit, having bumped into her on a remote beach in South-west Tasmania late last year when she and her female companions were completing a circumnavigation of the State by kayak.

The film features many of the top names in sea kayaking and travels to a variety of remote and beautiful venues, often featuring surf and ocean 'play spots'.

An inspirational film and a good addition to any serious sea-kayaker's library.

John Wilde

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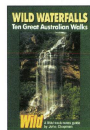
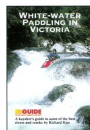
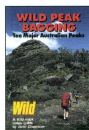
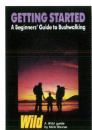
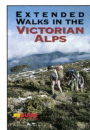
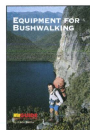
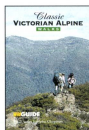
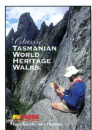
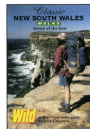
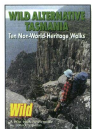
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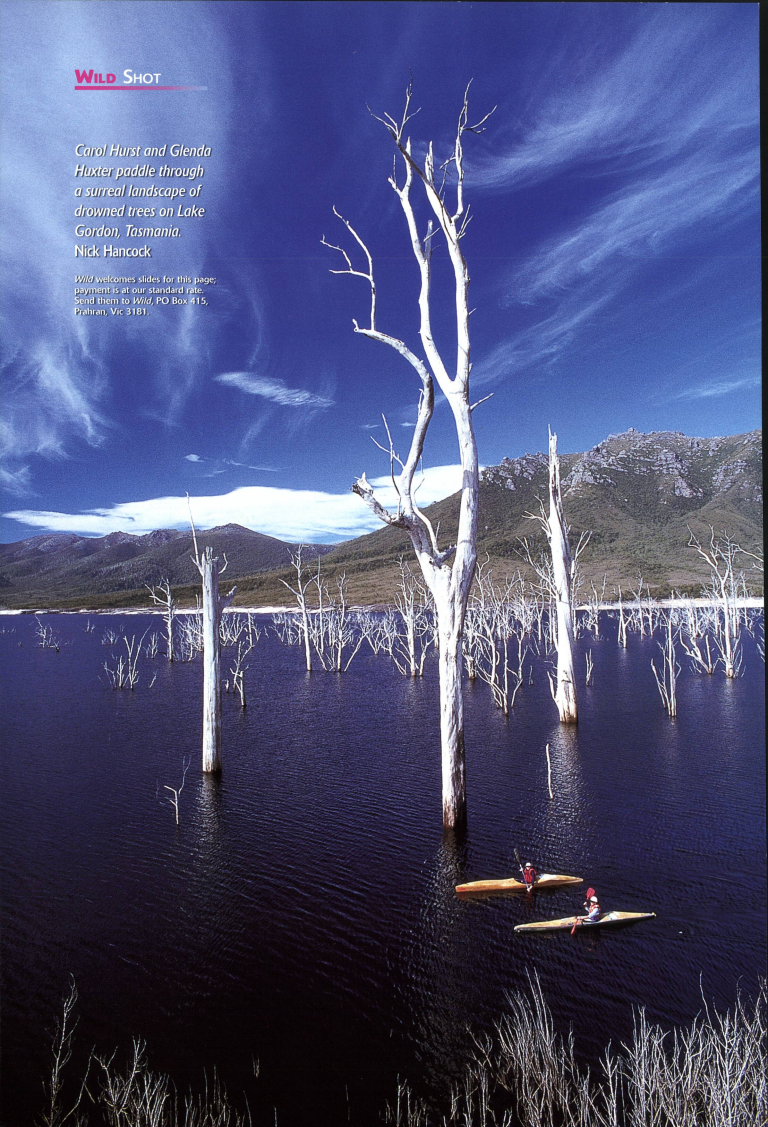
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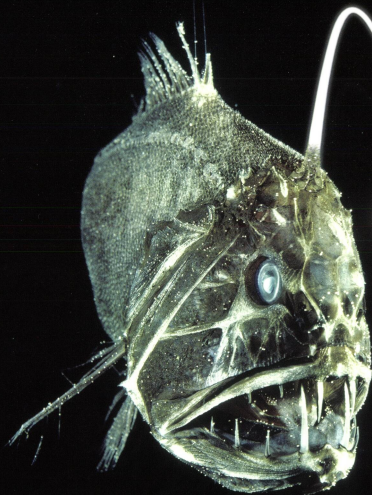
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